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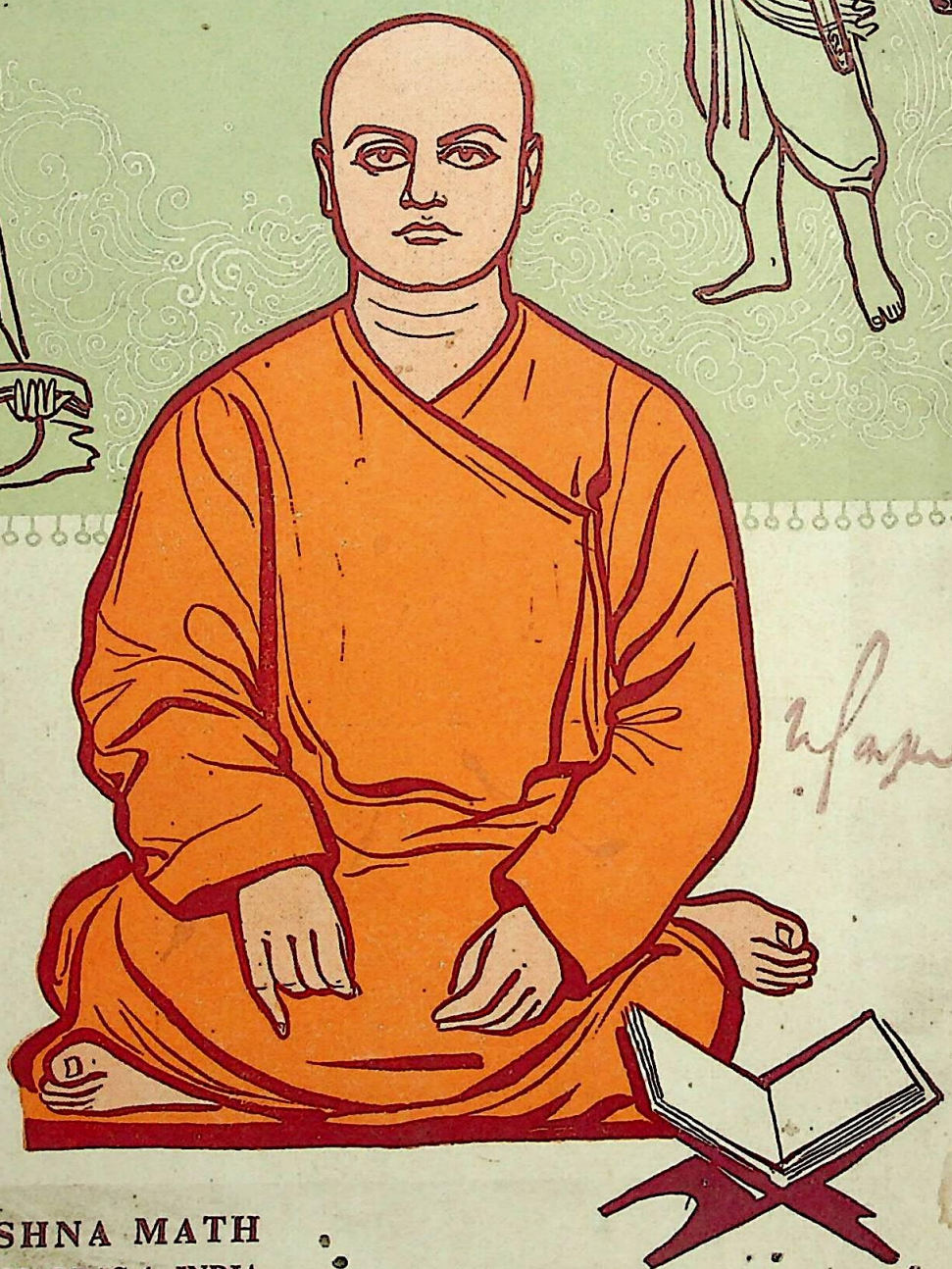
VOL. L, No. 4. AUGUST 1963

Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary Number



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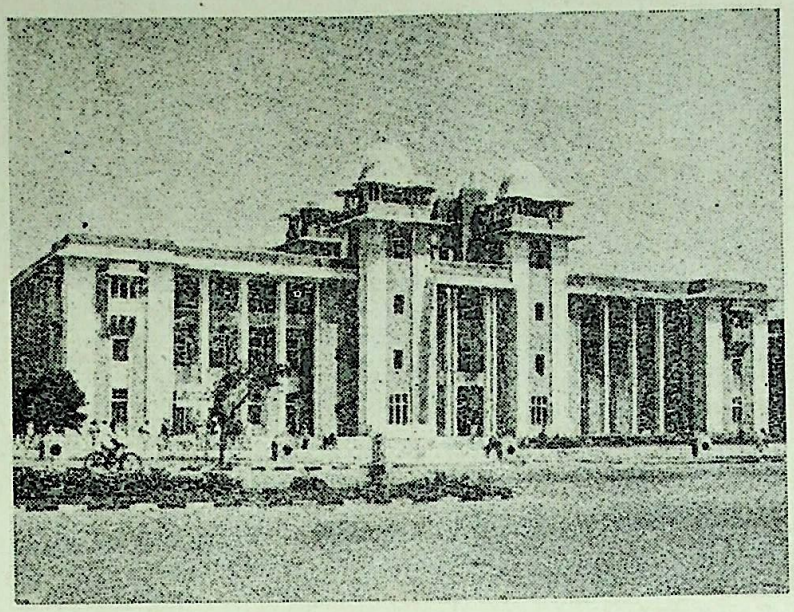

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Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary Number

AUGUST, 1963

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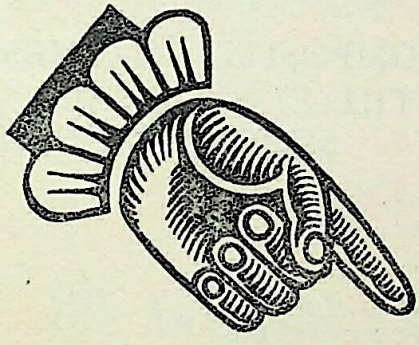

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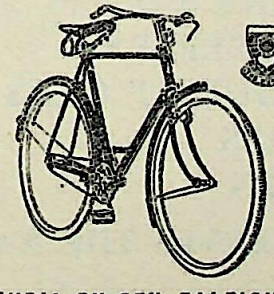

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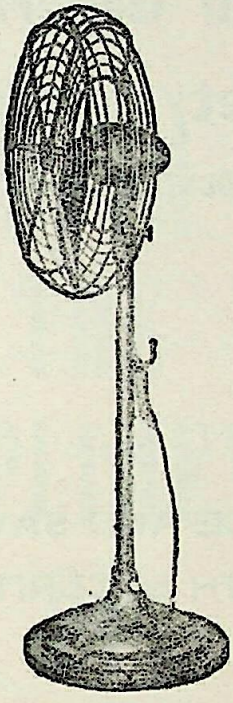

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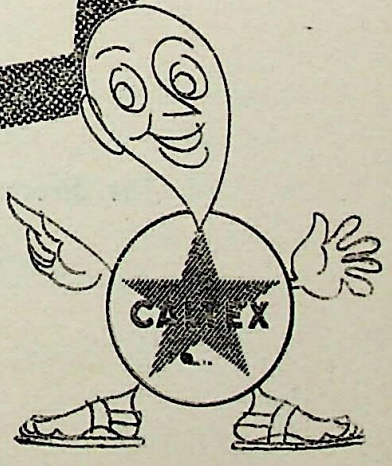

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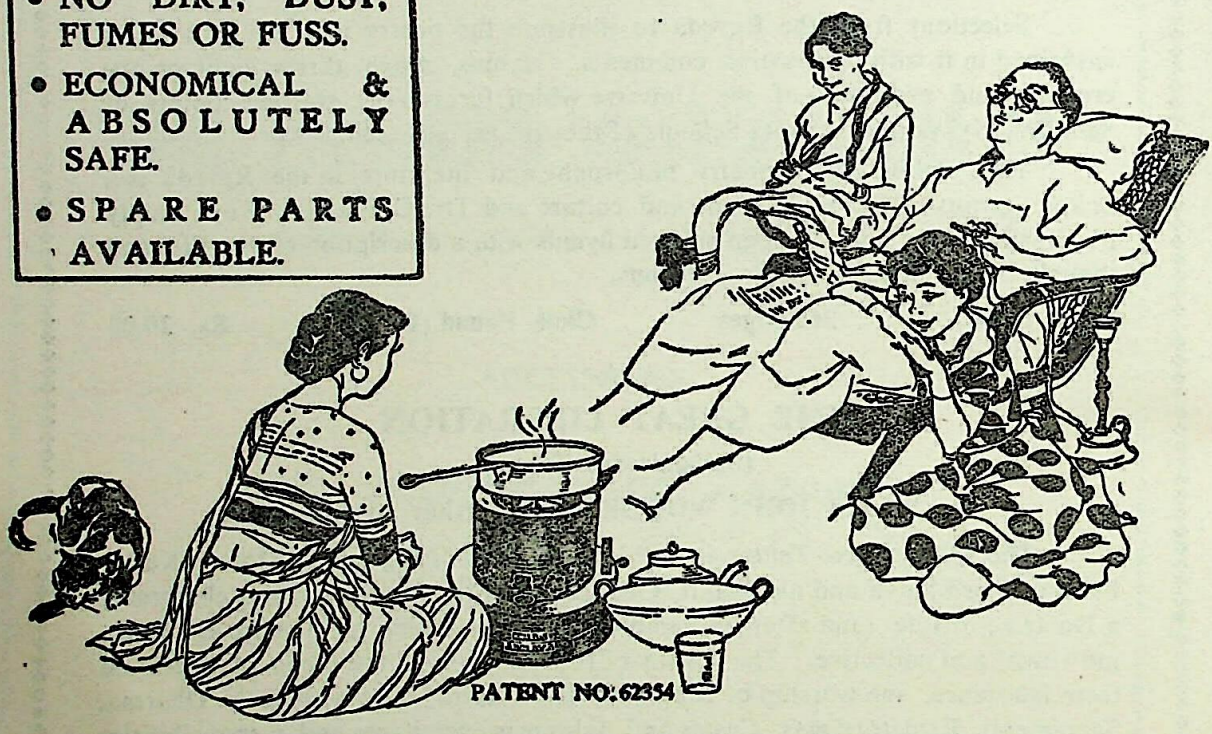

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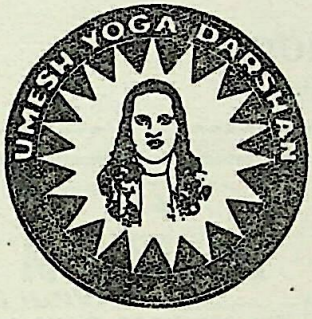

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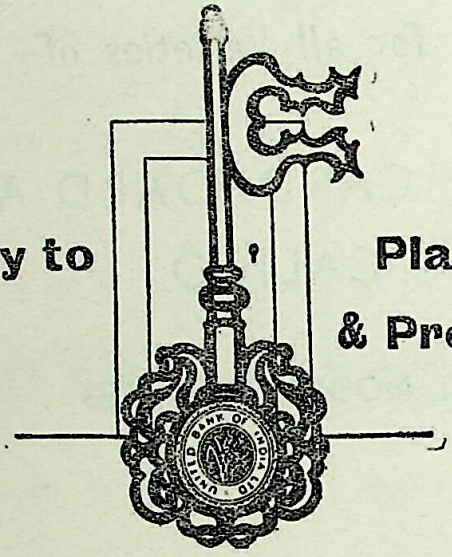

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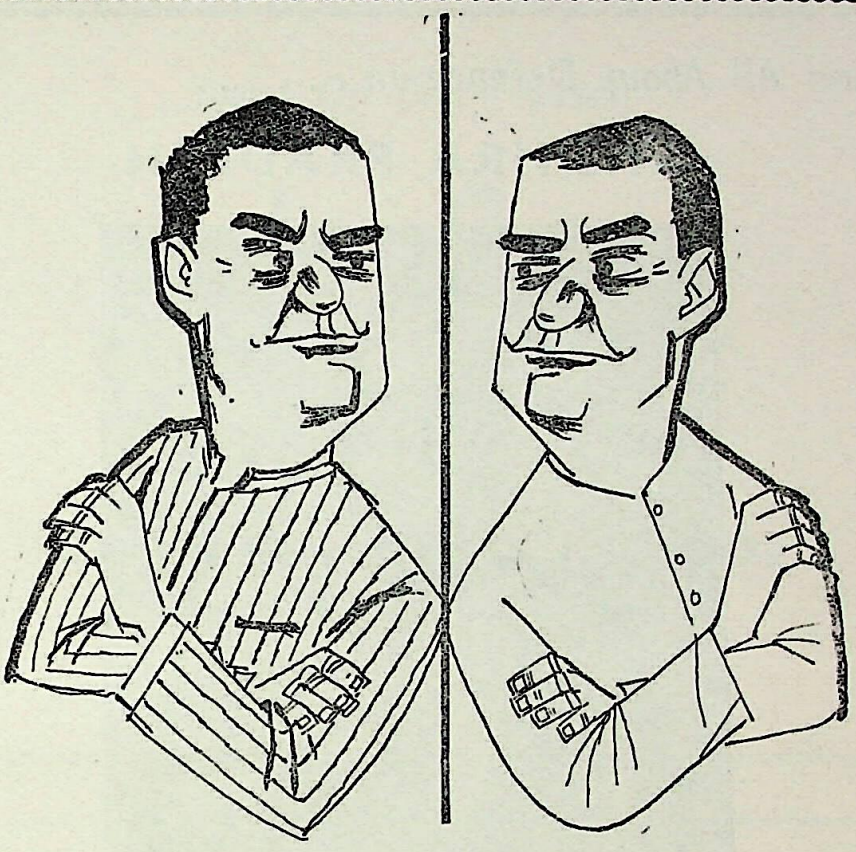

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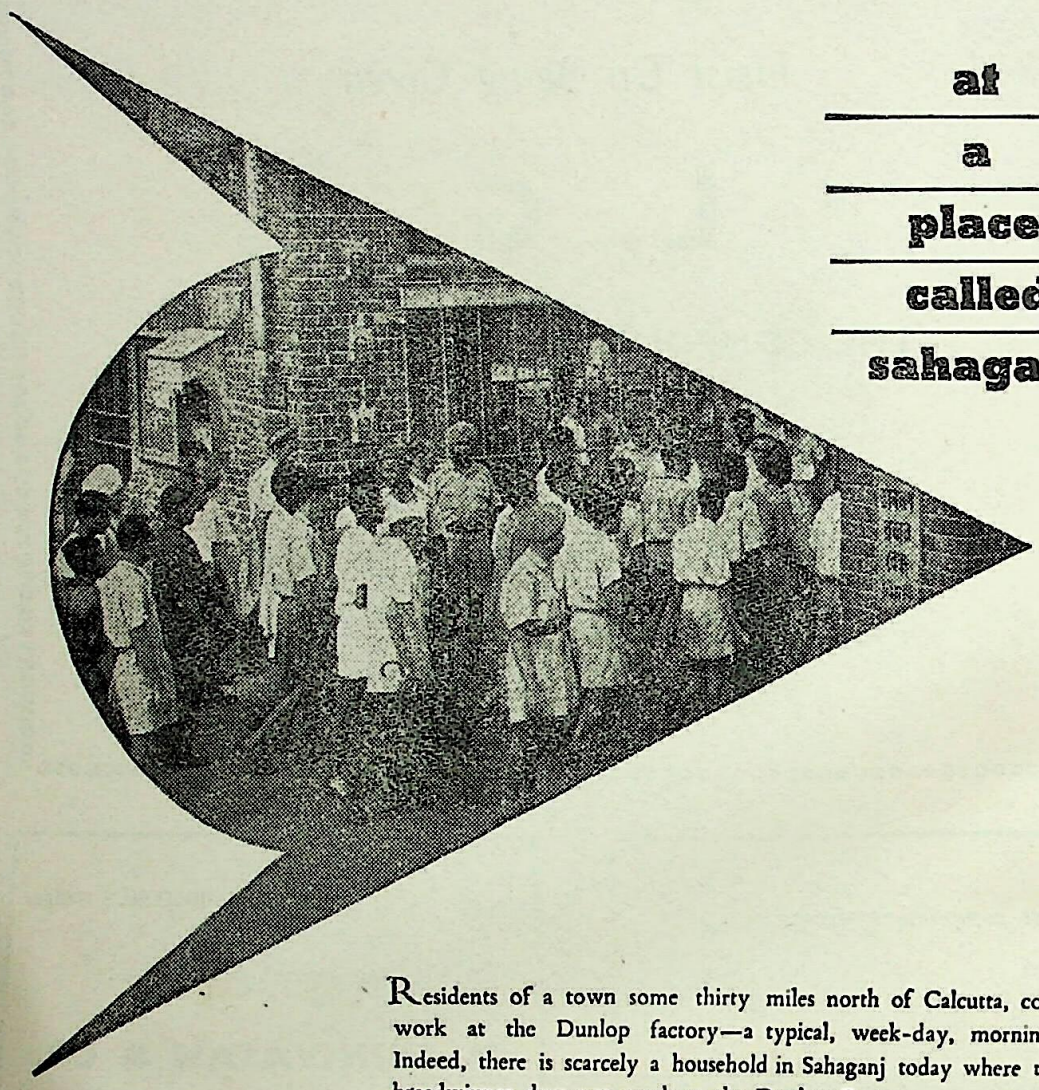

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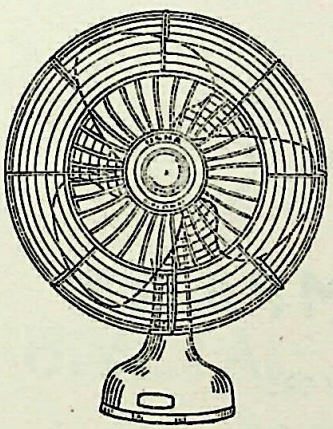

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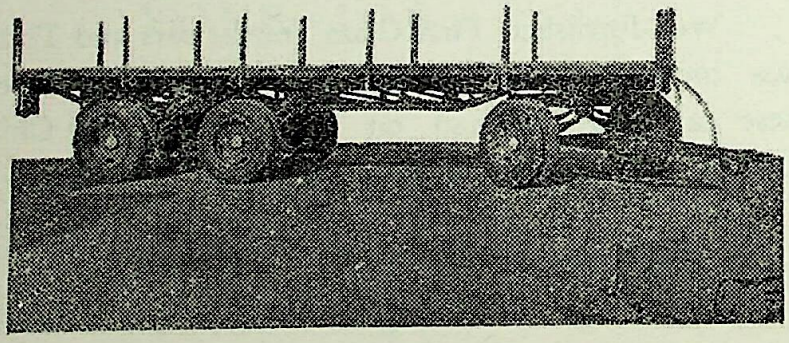

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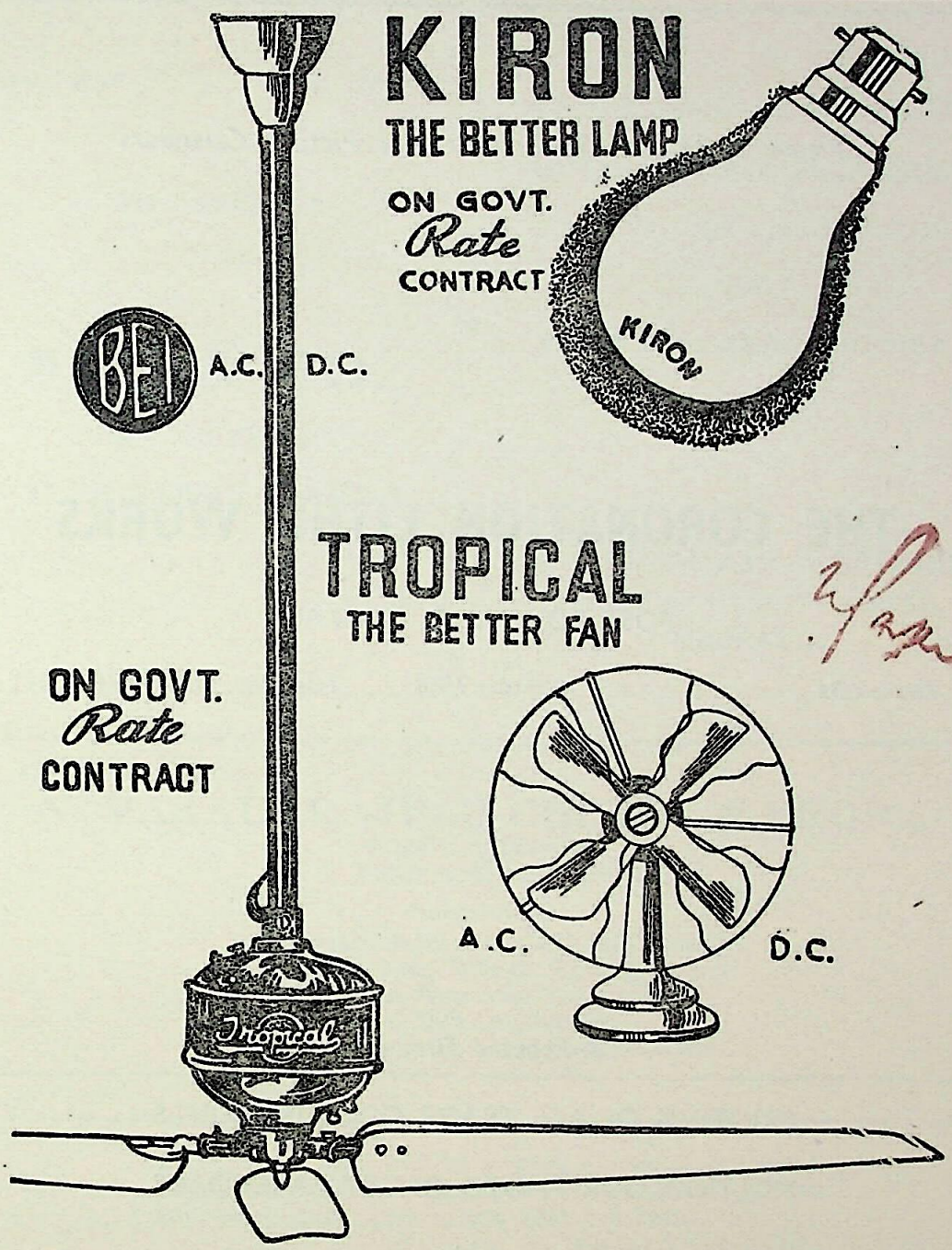

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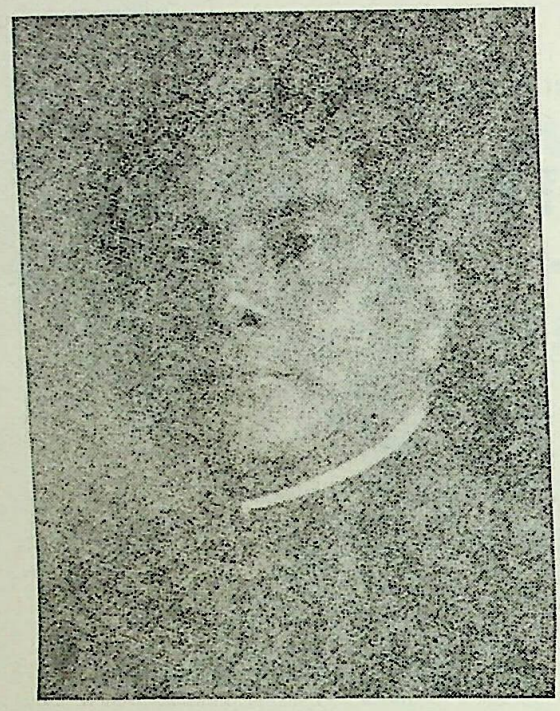

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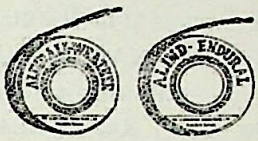
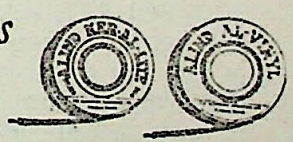


Let us all
work hard, my brethren,
this is no time for sleep.
On our work depends
the coming of the India
of the future.
Arise and awake
and see her seated here
on her eternal throne
rejuvenated, more glowing
than she ever was
this motherland of ours

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



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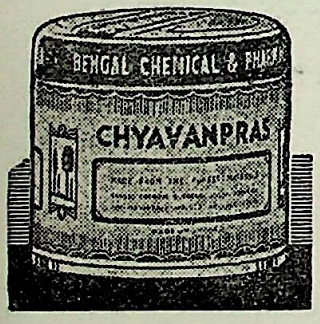

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... Be bold and face
The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease.
Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE VEDANTA KESARI

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SRI RAMAKRISHNA ON HIS BELOVED DISCIPLE

'Narendra is a boy of a very high order. He excels in every thing: vocal and instrumental music and studies. Again, he has control over his sense organs. He is truthful and has discrimination and dispassion. He has been devoted to God since his very boyhood. Religious practice on his part is superfluous.... Narendra is independent even of me. He is free from ignorance and delusion. He has no bonds. He is a great soul. He has many good qualities. So many virtues in one person!... Is he not unusually good?...

'Narendra belongs to the realm of the Absolute. He has a manly nature. So many devotees come here, but there is not one like him. Every now and then I take stock of the devotees. I find that some are like lotuses with ten petals, some like lotuses with sixteen petals, some like lotuses with a hundred petals. But among lotuses Narendra is a thousand-petalled lotus. Other devotees may be like pots or pitchers; but Narendra is a huge water-barrel. Others may be like pools or tanks; but Narendra is a huge reservoir like the Haldarpukur.... Narendra is a very big receptacle; one that can hold many things. He is like a bamboo with a big hollow space inside. Narendra is not under the control of anything. He is not under the control of attachment or sense pleasures....

'I have not seen another boy like Narendra.... He loses external consciousness in meditation during whole nights. My Narendra is a coin with no alloy whatsoever; ring it and you hear the truest sound. He does everything with the greatest ease. He is a true knower of Brahman. He sees light when he sits for meditation. Is it for nothing that I love Narendra so much?

'... Keshab, I saw, has become a world famous man on account of the abundance of one power but Narendra has in him eighteen such powers in the fullest measure. The hearts of Keshab and Vijay are brightened by a light of knowledge, like the flame of a lamp. But looking at Narendra I found that the very Sun of Knowledge had risen in his heart and removed from there even the slightest tinge of Māyā and delusion.... It is not I who say so. Mother showed me all that.'

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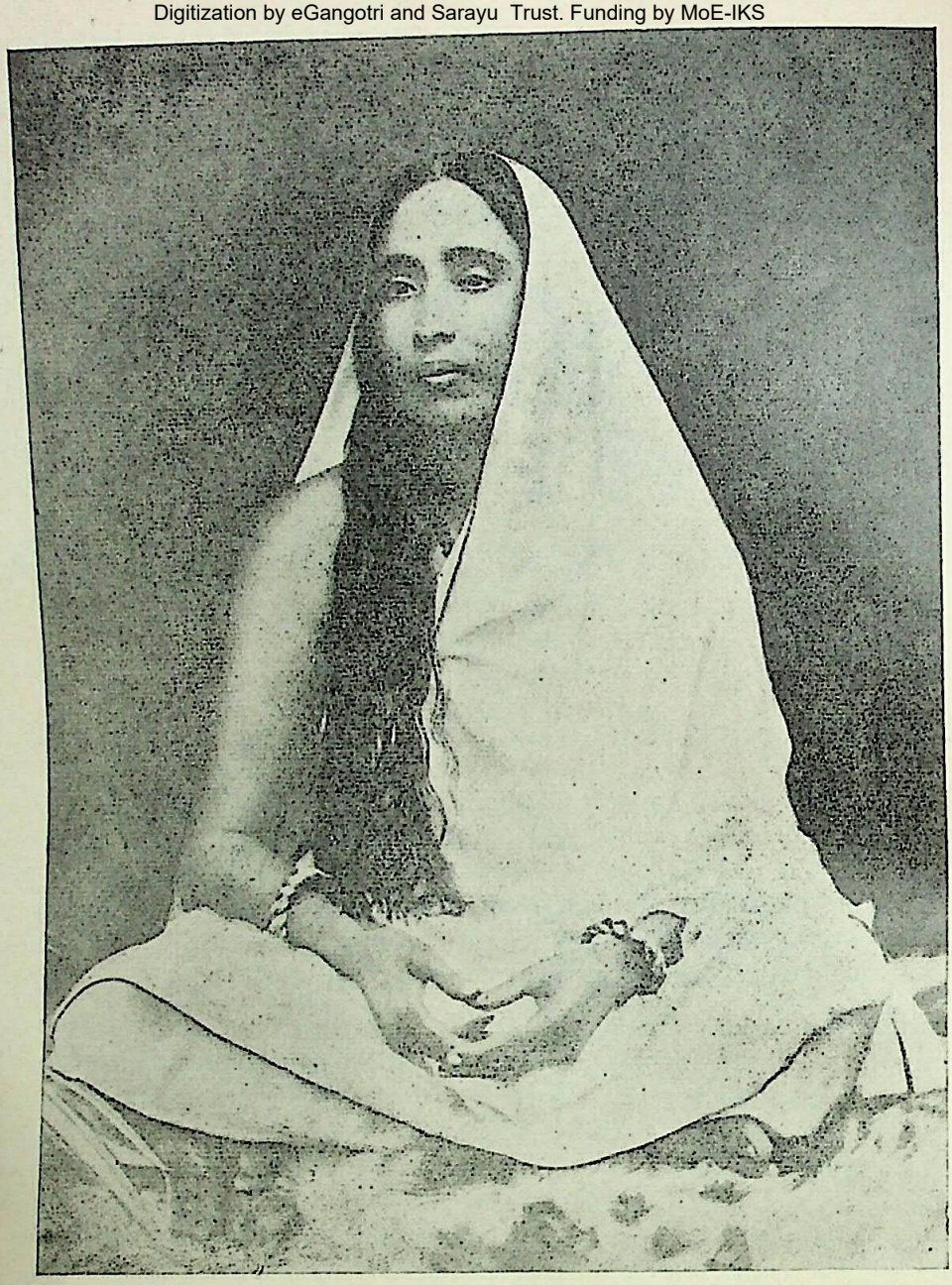

SRI SARADA DEVI—THE HOLY MOTHER

WHAT HOLY MOTHER SAID ABOUT SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

'Naren is of divine origin and full of purity from his infancy and about whom Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) mentioned that he was a Ṛṣi, a great sage! . . . Though fully imbued with the spirit of renunciation, and an all-embracing love and immersed in the eternal joy of communion with the Infinite, he has been suffering for the good of others . . . He gave his life blood to the service of others. . . . He was specially brought by Sri Thakur (Sri Ramakrishna) from the *Saptarṣimaṇḍala* for preaching his lofty ideals, for the elevation of the masses and for the good of humanity. . . . He was the greatest *Ṛṣi* of the *Saptarṣis* (seven sages). The Master could have declared that Naren was one among a hundred *Ṛṣis*; but he actually said 'one among the seven'. . . . What Naren has done will endure for ever. He was born for His work. Thousands will look upon him as the enlightened teacher of the world.'

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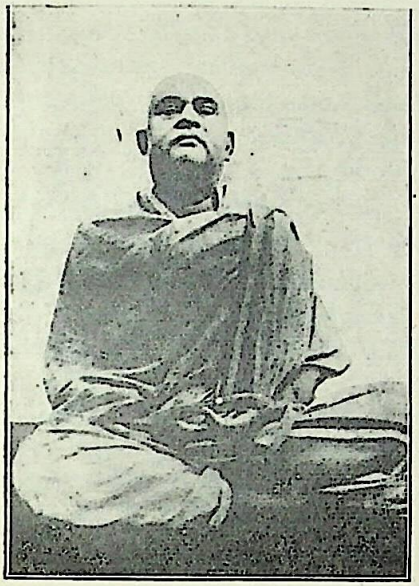
HOW THE BROTHER-DISCIPLES LOOKED UPON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

Time there was when the different Bhāṣyas of the same text used to puzzle and bewilder us; but the great Acharya (Sri Ramakrishna) has come to show the ground of their reconciliation and harmony as a whole and has made our Revered Swami Vivekananda the mouthpiece to proclaim the sublime truth which he showed practically in his every day life.[1]... Time alone will show the extent of Swamiji's labours and how much he has raised Mother India, in the estimation of the great nations of the West. ...Let us all rally round the sacred memory of the great life for united effort, for the regeneration of our land and of our people.[2]

SWAMI BRAHMANANDA.

* * * *

SWAMI PREMANANDA

Swamiji is Nara-Narayana, one of the seven seers. Lord Shiva Himself took his form for the good of mankind. He incarnated Himself for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many. Don't you see in what a short time he created a tremendous sensation in the world? As the days pass you will understand that everything he taught is true. He sowed seeds which will sprout and grow into a huge tree and in the shade of this tree the world will find peace. ... What joy he used to give us all. Just remembering him our hairs stand on end and we feel an ecstatic thrill. ... Hail Swamiji, the incarnation of Shiva.[3]

SWAMI PREMANANDA.

* * * *

[1] *The Vedanta Kesari*, 1930-31, p. 230.
[2] *Brahmavadin*, 1902, p. 510.
[3] *Vedanta and the West*, No. 139, pp. 32-41.

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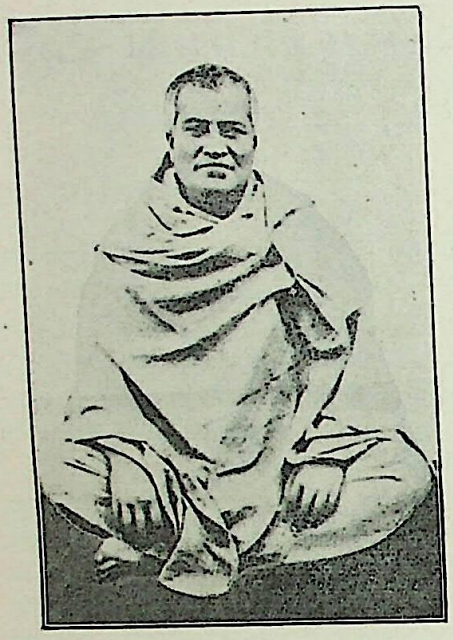


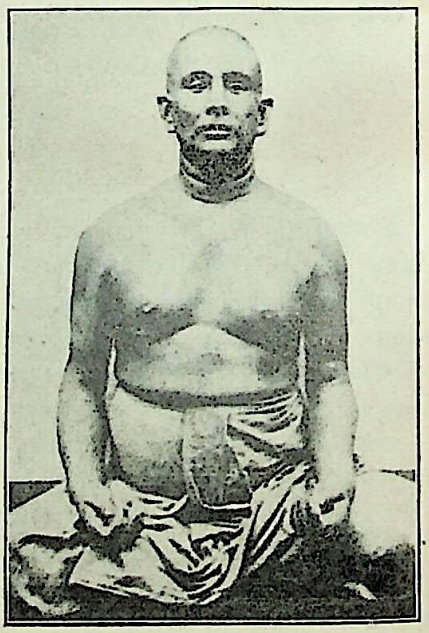
SWAMI SHIVANANDA

It was Swamiji alone who foresaw the innumerable ways in which the power of the Master would find its outlet through diverse channels in diverse modes ; few others could visualize them. . . .The Master entrusted Swamiji with the mission of propagating the message of the age. Strengthened by that force, Swamiji too worked for the good of the world. The ideas he left behind will work themselves out in various countries through various channels and through various persons. As a result all the countries will have all-round development.[4]

SWAMI SHIVANANDA.

* * * *

For years we all associated so closely with Swamiji — eating, talking, sharing jokes and stories. Yet we were never able to recognise Swamiji's true nature. He was such an extraordinary soul — how strange we did not realise this while he was alive. Now we understand a little. It was beyond the reach of our intellect to appreciate what a great sage our Master had brought with him. The longer I listened to Uddhava's words, the more I realised this. We did everything together with Swamiji — yet he eluded us. In those days, we all thought he was one of us — only perhaps more able, more talented. An expert in all fields — as a student, as a lecturer, as a musician. But how much more than this he was ! It seems to me that such a great man with so many perfections and such adeptness in so many fields was never born before. And what a capacity he had to see the potentialities for good in others ! If there was just a tiny bit of virtue in a person, even that he would make much of. That was his capacity. He had the power to awaken people and make them reach great heights. And what a heart ! How deeply he felt for others ! He had infinite love for all. Such sympathy I never witnessed before and shall not see again. His words could almost bring a dead man back to life ! When I talk with you, you soon become drowsy and lose interest. But when Swamiji spoke, even a man in his grave would almost have to jump up and say : 'Let me hear these words !' Swamiji's words were so powerful, both in feeling and language, that they straightaway entered the heart. Everything else was forgotten when he spoke. He was capable of lifting us all to a higher level of consciousness.[5]



SWAMI TURIYANANDA

SWAMI TURIYANANDA.

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[4] *Prabuddha Bharata*, August 1962, p. 323.
[5] *Vedanta and the West*, No. 154, p. 56.

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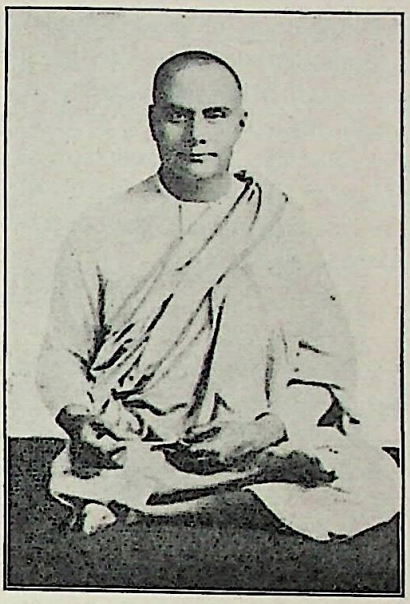

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Those who have met Swamiji and heard him speak, will remember his fascinating personality, his fine intelligent face beaming with celestial radiance mingled with the innocent smile of a child, his deep musical voice, his uncommon eloquence, and above all, his wonderful oratorical powers which drew from the hearts of his appreciative listeners, the exclamation that he was an orator by divine right.

I have met many people in this country (U.S.A.) during my six years' stay who regard the 'Raja Yoga' in the same light as the most devout Christian regards his own scriptures. It has been a revelation to many agnostic and sceptical minds; it has transformed the characters of many. Every passage of this wonderful book is charged as it were with the soul-stirring spiritual power generated by the gigantic battery of the pure soul of our great Yogi. ...After receiving the highest honours from three great nations, Swamiji's mind was neither elated with pride or self-conceit, nor was his head turned for half a second from the blessed feet of the beloved Master. With the same childlike simplicity, with the same humility of character which he had possessed before he came to America and keeping the same fire of renunciation alive in his soul, he realized the transitoriness of all the triumphal honours which were showered upon him.... As a man his character was pure and spotless; as a philosopher he was the greatest of all Eastern and Western philosophers.... He was like the living example of Vedanta in all its different branches.[6]

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA.

* * * *

SWAMI SARADANANDA

With Swami Vivekananda, meditation was as it were, his life. He kept at all times his mind meditating on God, even while he was eating, lying, sitting and doing other necessary physical acts. The Master used to say that he had attained perfection in meditation.[7] ...I had witnessed with my own eyes the intense eagerness of Swami Vivekananda for the realization of God, how the spiritual awakening came on him when he went to deposit the fee for his Law Examination; how, goaded to restlessness by it, he ran, oblivious of the world outside, barefooted and with only one piece of cloth on, through the streets of the city to the feet of Sri Guru at Kasipur and, like one mad, laid bare to him the anguish of his heart, and obtained his grace; how, since then he spent his time night and day in japa, meditation, devotional songs and spiritual study; how on account of his

[6] *Brahmavadin*, 1903, pp. 328-347.
[7] *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master*, p. 472.

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boundless enthusiasm for sadhana, his usually tender heart turned adamant and remained quite indifferent to the sufferings of his mother and brothers; and how, advancing with single-minded devotion on the path of sadhana pointed out by the Guru, he was having vision after vision, culminating at last in his first enjoyment of the bliss of the Nirvikalpa samadhi in a short period of three or four months. All these things took place before our very eyes and completely struck us dumb. Greatly delighted, the Master used to praise highly the Swami's extraordinary devotion, eagerness and enthusiasm for sadhana.[8]

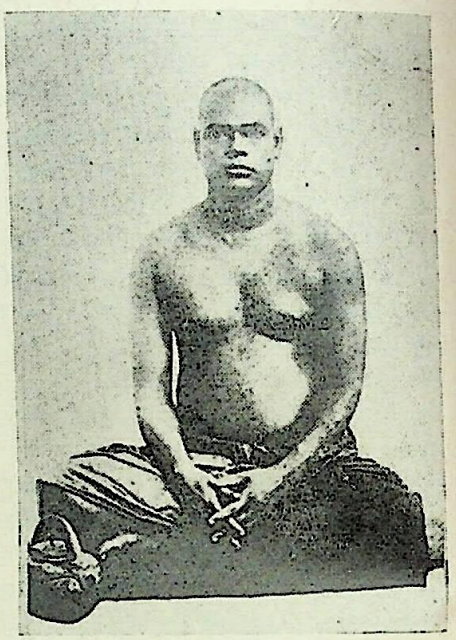
SWAMI SARADANANDA.

* * * *

To him, who, sifting out the Eternal from the transitory phenomena of this world, made it his sport to concentrate thereon his mind, purified by discrimination and renunciation, to that discriminating soul I salute.

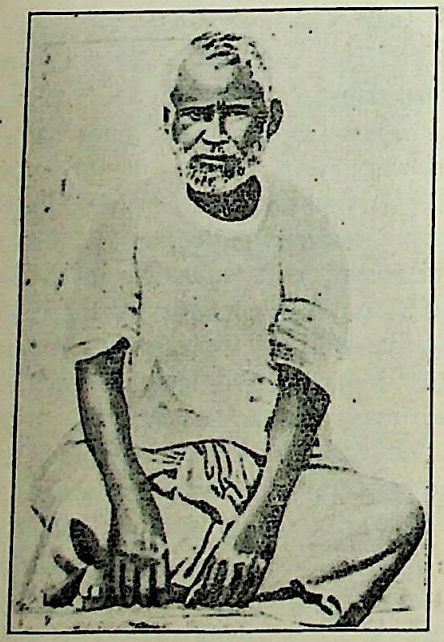
To him whose mind was immersed in the bliss that comes of discrimination, whose nature delighted solely in kindling discrimination in others, and whose grace was made beautiful by the glow of discrimination, to that discriminating soul my salutations ever go.

To him in whose graceful form, truth and knowledge had their abode, and which imparts a joy incessant, without beginning or end, to that embodiment of bliss I bow.



SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

Verily as the sun dispels the blinding darkness, as the Lord Vishnu destroys the wicked ones, in exactly the same manner he whose handsome appearance, the cynosure of all eyes, drives away the threefold misery of life —



SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA

To that Teacher of teachers, supremely pure, the guardian of the world, the lovable, the prince of Yogins, who took up the human form for the good of mankind, to that Vivekananda I bow.

I salute that king of renouncers, the sage, Vivekananda, who was of the essence of *Satchidananda*, the Lord, the remover of distress.[9]

SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA.

* * * *

What devotion Swamiji had for Sri Ramakrishna! One time the Master gave him a pair of shoes to wear, but he never wore them. Others learnt devotion from him. When Swamiji came back from America I hesitated to approach him, because he had received such worship in the West. Swamiji took me by the

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

[9] Translation of a Sanskrit hymn composed by Swami Ramakrishnananda on January 28, 1911. (vide *The Story of a Dedicated Life*, second edition, p. 139).

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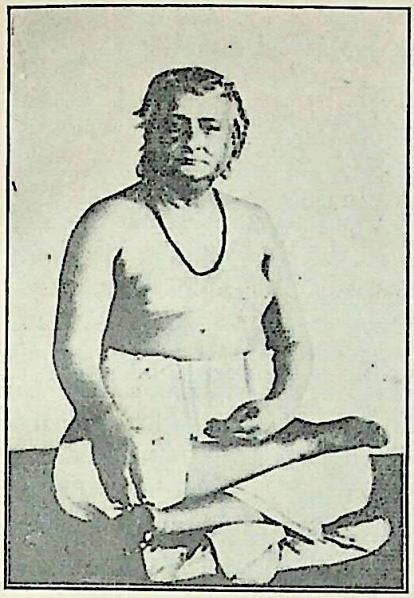


SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

hand, and said, 'I am still the same Naren and you are that same Leto. What you see is all the will of the Lord. It is the play of the Lord's power.'... Only through the meritorious deeds of many past births can one get a Vivekananda as a brother disciple. The Master asked him to look after the rest of us and what did he not do for us? Yes, I worship Vivekananda.[10]

SWAMI ADBHUTANANDA.

* * * *

Swamiji was an embodiment of principles. He was not like ordinary men, a compact of flesh and blood — he was ideas personified. His patriotism was not as is usually understood in the West. His was the identification of the Self with the country.

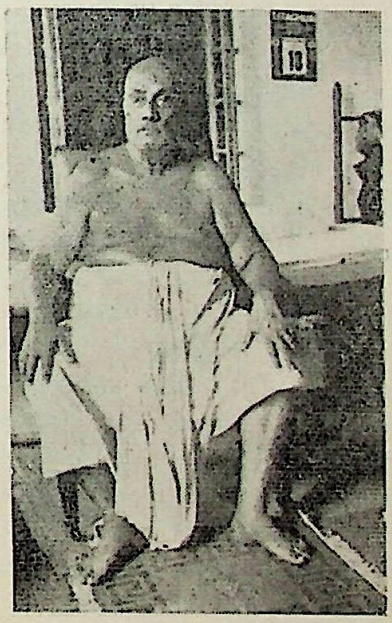
With the auspicious advent of Swamiji, the patriot-saint, a new age has been ushered in and the horizon of India has been flooded with the rays of the sun of the religion of service, so ardently cherished by him.[11]

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA.

* * * *

Swamiji's lectures had a special feature. While speaking he used to forget himself and would become an entirely different person. His speeches turned the core of people's hearts. I have myself seen in Belur Math distinguished Western disciples of Swamiji squatting on the floor all round his chair and drinking in his inspired words. And how forcefully did he speak! Now things are being done according to what he said and people are getting inspiration from his words.[12] At the Belur Math, I recall, one night Swamiji was pacing up and down the verandah singing to himself, 'Thou art the saviour, Mother.' He repeated this line over and over again. At times I could see him standing motionless in ecstasy with tears of joy running down his cheeks, and so he continued until dawn.[13]

SWAMI VIJNANANANDA.



SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

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[10] *Vedanta and the West*, No. 140, pp. 57-62.
[11] The Vedanta Kesari, 1961-62, p. 488. and *Swami Akhandananda* by Swami Annadananda.
[12] *Vedanta and the West*
[13] *Prabuddha Bharata*, March 1963, p. 85

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—AN EXEMPLAR OF HIS TEACHINGS

Lives of great spiritual leaders are the best commentaries, the greatest illustrations of their own teachings. In them we find thought, speech and action working in consonance. As a popular Sanskrit verse elegantly puts it, 'the holy ones are one in mind, speech and action'.[1] How simple this definition looks! But what a vast meaning is encompassed in it. As if in a sweep, it includes all the highest virtues man can conceive of. It means the inherence and manifestation of truthfulness, purity, sincerity, unselfishness, unbiased love and a score more of other virtues. It is a staggering list, no doubt, but that is the very reason that there are very rare souls that reach such dizzy heights of spiritual realization, such eminence. Sri Ramakrishna emphasized the need for 'making thought and word perfectly at one' as a discipline even for those who sought God in earnest. Swamiji writes to a disciple in Madras, 'Be holy and pure and the fire will come'. This was the keynote of all his teachings. Coming from Vivekananda these words had tremendous effect. They carried his vigour and enthused puissance into the reader. They were not mere words of encouragement but the products of the faith and conviction born of his own experience. He was never tired of repeating this formula, whether it was in conversations, dialogues or letters, to impress upon his audience the primacy of cultivating these virtues. In one of his letters he remarks, 'Be pure, staunch and sincere to the very backbone, and everything will be all right. If you have marked anything in the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna it is this — they are sincere to the backbone'.[2]

[1] मनस्येकं वचस्येकं कर्मण्येकं महात्मनाम् ।

[2] *Works*, Vol. V, p. 44 Epistles.

Place of Truth

And on what a high pedestal Swamiji did place truth! It was to him, as with his Master, the very foundation of spiritual life. 'Be not discouraged, one word of truth can never be lost; for ages it may be hidden under rubbish but it will show itself sooner or later. Truth is indestructible, virtue is indestructible, purity is indestructible,'[3] writes Swamiji in a letter to a disciple, with a certitude that can pierce through granite and cleave through all doubts. How was he able to do it? Because he was himself full of truth and nothing but that. Truth was with him a natural possession from his very childhood, and all through his life we see him struggling and fighting for it. One such urge brought him to Sri Ramakrishna and what marvellous effect it has produced in the world of thought and action, both in the East and the West! Yet this is but the beginning.

To get a little extended view of Swamiji's life we shall follow him through his peregrinations, through his travels in the foreign lands and just take an instance or two to learn how passionately attached to truth he was, sometimes at the risk of even estrangement from his best friends. We refer the reader to a letter written to Miss Mary Hale on 1st February, 1895, wherein he mentions about an excited argument he had with a Presbyterian gentleman. 'Who,' he writes 'as usual got very hot, angry and abusive'. He continues, 'I was afterwards severely reprimanded by Mrs. Bull for this, as such things hinder my work. So it seems, is your opinion'. Both of these ladies were his staunchest supporters and well-meaning friends, but where truth was concerned he was no respecter of persons. Let us quote his own

[3] *Ibid.*

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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words, 'I know full well how good it is for one's worldly prospects to be *sweet*. I do everything to be sweet, but when it comes to a horrible compromise with the truth within, I then stop. . . . I believe in Samadarśitvam — same state of mind with regard to all. The duty of the ordinary man is to obey the commands of his "God", society, but the children of light never do so. This is an eternal law.... The worshippers of "Vox populi" go to annihilation in a moment — the children of truth *live for ever*.'

It is no doubt true that the path of truth is not strewn with flowers, but a spiritual leader comes not to cater to the whims and fancies of a society and allow it to run to its ruin. He has a mission to fulfil — that of drawing society up towards him. The spiritual leaders know the hollowness of wealth, beauty, name and fame. So they resent and fight falsehood and expose it. They *know* that truth alone triumphs — not believe but *know*. Swamiji compares 'truth to a corrosive substance of infinite power. It burns its way in wherever it falls—in soft substance at once, hard granite slowly, but it must.' Continuing his letter he writes: 'I am so sorry, Sister, that I cannot make myself sweet and accommodating to every black falsehood. But I cannot. I have suffered for it all my life, but I cannot. I have essayed and essayed. But I cannot. At last I have given it up. The Lord is great... God of Truth; be Thou alone my guide! . . . What reason is there for me to conform to the vagaries of the world around me and not obey the voice of Truth within?'[4] That is what Swami Vivekananda symbolizes — Truth. Let us not think that after this correspondence either Miss Mary Hale or after the 'fight', as Swamiji calls it, Mrs. Bull, lost any regard, respect or admiration for Swamiji. On the other hand they stood by him till the end. Many were such instances in the life of Swamiji. But he never gave in. His mind instinctively recoiled from untruth.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 56, 57.

Unselfishness

Now what did Swamiji mean by 'fire' in the sentence quoted above? It is the fire, the vigour, enthusiasm and energy to plunge undaunted into action, a determination to face all odds or die, for a noble cause. It is the fire of holiness and unselfishness which can achieve wonders. Swamiji declared on another occasion: 'But mind you, this is life's experience: if you really want the good of others, the whole universe may stand against you and cannot hurt you. It must crumble before your power of the Lord Himself in you, if you are sincere and really unselfish.'[5] He urged his followers to be totally unselfish. He used to quote often a Sanskrit verse which runs in the following strain: 'The wise one should give up wealth and even life for the sake of others. When death is certain, it is better to die for a good cause.'[6] For, he said, that is the true way to make best use of our human life. Once when Ingersol said to Swamiji, 'I believe in making the most of the world, in squeezing the orange dry, because this world is all we are sure of.' Swamiji replied: 'I know a better way to squeeze the orange of this world than you do and I get more out of it. . . . I know there is no fear, so I enjoy the squeezing. I have no duty, no bondage of wife and children and property. I can love all men and women. Every one is God to me. Think of the joy of loving man as God! Squeeze your orange this way, and get ten thousand fold more out of it. Get every single drop.'[7]

Mark the words 'believe' used by Ingersol and 'know' used by Swamiji. Whereas the former speaks from the plane of the five senses and is not sure of the outcome, Swamiji is emphatic and certain, having been vouchsafed the vision of the Divine in everything long long before, at the feet of his Master. So the words that came out of his lips were from the inner-

[5] *Ibid.*, Vol. VIII, p. 83. 'My Life and Mission.'

[6] धनानि जीवितञ्चैव परार्थे प्राज्ञ उत्सृजेत्।
सन्निमित्ते वरं त्यागो विनाशे नियते सति॥

[7] *Works*, Vol. VII, p. 75. Inspired Talks.

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most core of his being and had the stamp of authority.

Another time Swamiji declared: 'To be unselfish, perfectly selfless, is salvation itself for the man within dies, and God alone remains.' Here are the words of a sage, a seer, very clear and unambiguous and at the same time apparently showing an easy path to salvation. But it is to be worked out. Man must be intensely and motivelessly working for others, with not a thought of what will happen to himself. He himeslf did it. One of his American friends remarks: 'He did not seem to be conscious of himself at all. It was the other man who interested him.' Out of the fullness of the heart Swamiji spoke: 'You little know how nothing would be impossible for you in life if you labour day and night for others with your heart's blood!' Again, he prophesies: 'Our best work is done, our greatest influence is exerted, when we are without thought of self.'

Love of humanity

But to be 'unselfish, perfectly selfless' we require a better basis than the mere exercise of the intellect. We should have the heart, the feeling, the love of humanity. Swamiji had it in ample measure and that was what sent him to America, to seek means to ameliorate the condition of the suffering masses of India. He had failed to get any response from the rich of his own country in this direction, and was struggling, as it were, in the jaws of death. He panted for direction from on High and when the anguish reached the climax, the command came. For him religiousness was not making long faces, nor was it looking down on others. 'Love and charity for the whole human race, that is the test of true religiousness,' he stated. Let us not jump to the conclusion that we have this in abundance. Swamiji was aware of this fault of man and warned us against this self-complacency. He observes: 'I do not mean the sentimental statement that all men are brothers, but that one must feel the oneness of human life.' Many are ready to accommodate their brother as long as everything goes their way, as long as the brother does not cross their path. But as soon as their least interest is affected, woe unto the brother! This is not loving humanity. It is pure selfishness masquerading in the form of charity. Swamiji reiterates that no society in any country has come to that excellence 'where the effectiveness of individual self-sacrifice for the good of the many and oneness of purpose and endeavour actuating every member of the society for the common good of the whole, has been realized.' Let there be no misgivings about it. It can be done by a few, and the persons on whom God's choice falls must consider themselves blessed. There is no room for pride about it. Swamiji decisively points out: 'All are helped on by nature, and will be so helped even though millions of us were not here. The course of nature will not stop for such as you and me; it is only a blessed privilege to you and to me that we are allowed, in the way of helping others, to educate ourselves. . . . So drive out of your mind the idea that you have to do something for the world; the world does not require any help from you. It is sheer nonsense on the part of any man to think that he is born to help the world; it is simply pride, it is selfishness insinuating itself in the form of virtue.'[8] He was himself humble to the end.

An incident in the life of the Swami that occurred at the Belur Math in the year 1901 shows his love for the poor, in a touching way. Some Santal labourers were working at the Math premises then. Swamiji used to visit them and hear their tales of woe. Sometimes tears would come to the Swami's eyes when he heard them and then the narrator would stop his tale, entreat Swamiji to go away. One day while Swamiji was talking with them some people of wealth and position came to see him. When he was told about the visitors, he said, 'I shan't be able to go now. I am quite happy with these people.' Another day he arranged to feed them with sweets and delicacies and

[8] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 87-88

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when they had eaten to their satisfaction, Swamiji turned to a disciple and said, 'I actually saw the Lord Himself in them. How simple-hearted and guileless they are!' And a little later addressing the Sannyasins and Brahmacharis of the Math he observed: 'See how simple-hearted these poor illiterate people are! Can you mitigate their misery a little? If not of what use is your wearing the gerua? . . . Alas! Nobody in our country thinks of the low, the poor and the miserable!' With the knowledge of history of the countries of the East and the West as background he prophetically remarked, 'Unless they (the masses) are raised, this motherland of ours will never awake.' 'You will be free in a moment, if you starve yourself to death by giving to another. If you will be perfect, you will become God,' said he on another occasion.

Purity of motive and sincerity of conviction

The motive power to work for humanity comes with renunciation, not merely outer, but inner also. There must not be any ulterior end in view at any time, prior, during or at the end of the work. That is purity of motive. This will not come unless sincere conviction, that the path chosen is sure to lead us to the goal, arises. Incidentally, we may point out, that sincerity of conviction and purity of motive form the groundwork of any other pathway, to spirituality, as well. Swamiji warns: 'Keep away from all insincere claimants to supernatural illumination.' Aye, that is the great hurdle that comes in spiritual life. We like to attain results quickly and without effort. Is it possible? No. But man is man. He knows it is impossible yet runs after the miraculous and the like. But those who are sincere, have the assurance of all the Great Ones, to which Swamiji too joins his voice: 'Truth, purity and unselfishness — wherever these are present, there is no power below or above the sun to crush the possessor thereof.' Is it not a reflection of his own life?

Chastity

'Chastity in thought, word, and deed, always, and in all conditions,' said Swamiji, 'is what is called Brahmacharya.' Than Swamiji there can be no better authority to speak on the value of chastity. He was pure as purity can be. Sri Ramakrishna said of him that he was like a blazing fire. The Master said, 'Maya stood ten steps away from Naren. She could not catch him in her net.' Let us, therefore, hear Swamiji's opinion about this virtue: 'It is only the chaste man or woman who can make the Ojas rise and store it in the brain, that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue.' 'Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual leaders of men have been very continent, and this is what gave them power.' Referring to his plan of education he said, 'It is *gurugrihavāsa*, living with the teacher that I would prescribe,' for that meant a life of celibacy. 'Everybody should be trained to practise absolute Brahmacharya and then only faith and shraddha will come. . . . Simply by the observance of strict Brahmacharya (continence) all learning can be mastered in a very short time. One has an unfailing memory of what one hears or knows but once. It is owing to this want of continence that everything is on the brink of ruin in our country,' remarked Swamiji on various occasions. Will the nation heed? It would be the best way of honouring Swamiji if it did. For it is the working out of his ideas, and not his name, that he liked to see.

Swamiji's personality

Commissioned by Divine Providence to preach the gospel of Vedanta, of tolerance, of spirituality he, it is hardly necessary to state, was well-equipped with all these and more. We have seen here, in a few of his teachings that we have discussed, that he never taught anything that he himself had not practised. As in the case of these teachings so too was he an exemplar in the love of god, and other

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virtues that he asked us to cultivate. This can be observed by anyone who cares to go through his life. We shall now conclude by a reference to the remarks of those, specially from the critical West, who had the opportunity to come in close contact with him.

Swamiji's personality was imposing and impressive. He had a regal bearing and a casual observer would take him to be a Rajah (a Prince). Here is a news item from the *Framingham Tribune*, which has recently been brought to light; it reads :

Friday, August 25, 1893.

Holliston : Miss Kate Sanborn, who has recently returned from the West, last week entertained the Indian Rajah, Swami Vivekananda. Behind a pair of horses furnished by liveryman F. W. Phipps, Miss Sanborn and the Rajah drove through town on Friday en route for Hunnewell's.[9]

This news item, appearing in a journal of a remote town, has its own importance and significance; and more so when it happens that Swamiji had not yet attained the fame and celebrity, which, after the Parliament of Religions, was his. This proves that his was a personality that could not be hidden.

It is also interesting to note that he left deep, abiding and loving memories with whomsoever he came in contact. Witness Mrs. Wright's letter to her mother which has recently come to light :

Annisquam, Mass.
August 29, 1893.

'Dear Mother,

We have been having a queer time. Kate Sanborn had a Hindoo monk in tow as I believe I mentioned in my last letter. John went down to meet him in Boston and missing him, invited him up here. He came Friday! In a long saffron robe that caused universal amazement. He was a most gorgeous vision. He had a superb carriage of the head, was very handsome in an oriental way, about thirty years old in time, ages in civilization. He stayed until Monday and was one of the most interesting people I have yet come across. We talked all day all night and began again with interest next morning. The town was in a fume to see him; the boarders at Miss Lane's in wild excitement. They were in and out of the Lodge constantly and little Mrs. Merrill's eyes were blazing and her cheeks red with excitement. Chiefly we talked religion. It was a kind of revival, I have not felt so wrought up for a long time myself! Then on Sunday John had him invited to speak in the Church and they took up a collection for a Heathen College to be carried on on strictly heathen principles — whereupon I retired to my corner and laughed until I cried.'[10]

Here are given the circumstances that brought Prof. J. H. Wright and Swamiji together. How this meeting helped Swamiji, to get entry into the Parliament of Religions as a delegate, is a matter of history too well-known to need repetition. But mark the impression left by Swamiji during that short visit.

We shall now quote from a letter of Ella Wheeler Wilcox, journalist and poet, to Mrs. Kate Tannatt Woods who had sometime played hostess to Swamiji. Of course this letter is of a later date (May, 1895) but it shows how the correspondent, who was one among the audience of Swamiji, felt about his personality. She writes :

'I was listening to Vivekananda this morning an hour. How honoured by fate you must feel to have been allowed to be of service to this Great Soul. I believe him to be the re-incarnation of some great Spirit — perhaps Buddha — perhaps Christ! He is so simple — so sincere, so pure, so unselfish. To have listened to him all winter is the greatest privilege life has ever offered me. It would be surprising to me that people could misunderstand or malign such a soul if I did not know how Buddha and Christ were persecuted and lied about by

[9] *Swami Vivekananda in America, New Discoveries* by Marie Louise Burke, pub. Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, page 16.

[10] *Ibid.*, page 20.

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small inferiors. His discourse this morning was most uplifting—his mere *presence* is that. His absolute sinking of *self* is what I like.'[11]

How enormously he should have touched the deep chords of their hearts to make them spontaneously pour out their adorations and encomiums on him! What a divine joy should have been brimming in their hearts to make them desire to share it with others! Yet speech is but a poor messenger of the heart. If even that sends a thrill through one's being, how greater should have been the feelings aroused in those hearts! One can feel it only when one comes across such a holy one. As words and descriptions can carry little meaning of what an ocean is, so too these letters convey but a faint echo of the resurrection of those hearts. Perhaps one can imagine it a little. But imageries will fall far far short of the real feeling. The magnitude of the spiritual benefit one can receive by a sight, a touch or communion with such spiritual luminaries is unfathomable. These letters, which form but a fraction of the few that have come to light, are living evidences of the soothing influence, like that of a cool mountain breeze, his sublime life breathed wherever he happened to be; nay even more, wherever his message spread. His life, like those of others of his eminence are verifications of the scriptural statements. These lives reiterate the scriptures and reimburse them with energy and vigour.

Finally let us reproduce from what Miss Sarah Farmer, the founder of the summer School for the Comparative Study of Religions, at Green Acre, wrote to the Vedanta Society of New York about the year 1902, after the passing away of Swamiji:

> 'To know Swami Vivekananda was a renewed consecration; to have him under one's roof was to feel empowered to go forth to the children of men and to help them all to a realization of their birthright as Sons of God. What Green Acre owes to him cannot be put into words. A little band of people had started to prove the providing care of God for those who only rely upon Him in utter faith and love. This great soul came into our midst and did more than any other to give to the work its true tone, for he *lived* every day the truth which his lips proclaimed and was to us the living evidence of the power manifested nineteen hundred years ago, in that he went about his Father's business in perfect joyousness and childlike trust, without "purse or script" and found all promises fulfilled, all needs met. Forever after, as he grew in knowledge and power, his influence increased among us and helped to strengthen our faith, and today his power for good is even greater and will continue to be, if we are true to Him who worketh in us "to will and to do His good pleasure".'[12]

Such then was Swami Vivekananda, an embodiment of the highest virtues he preached.

[11] *Ibid.*, page 29.

[12] *The Brahmavadin*, January, 1903, pages 56-57.

Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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HOMAGE TO SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I have come here to pay my homage and respect to the revered memory of Swami Vivekananda, whose birthday is being celebrated today (January 1923). I have gone through his works very thoroughly and after having gone through them, the love that I had for my country became a thousand-fold. I ask you, young men not to go away empty-handed without imbibing something of the spirit of the place where Swami Vivekananda lived and died.

MAHATMA GANDHI.

* * * * * *

The going forth of Vivekananda, marked by the Master as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer.

Vivekananda was a soul of puissance, if there was one, a lion among men. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not where, in something that is not yet formed, something lionine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India, and we say, 'Behold! Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his motherland, and in the souls of her children'.

SRI AUROBINDO.

* * * * * * *

Vivekananda has said that there is the power of Brahman in every human being; also that it is through the poor and the dispossessed that Narayana seeks and awaits our service. What a grand message! It lights up for man's consciousness the path to limitless liberation from the trammels and limitations of his self. This is not an ethical injunction laying down any specific rule of conduct, no narrow commandment for the regulation of our behaviour. Opposition to untouchability is inherent in the Message — opposition not on any ground of political expediency, but because the Message is incompatible with insult to the humanity of Man, for untouchability is a self-inflicted insult to every one of us.

And because the Message of Vivekananda is a call of awakening to the totality of our Manhood, that it has set so many of our youths on diverse paths to freedom through Work and through Renunciation and Service.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

* * * * * * *

Few indeed could comprehend or fathom Vivekananda — even among those who had the privilege of becoming intimate with him. His personality was rich, profound and complex and it was this personality — as distinct from his teachings and writings — which account for the wonderful influence he has exerted on his countrymen and particularly on Bengalees. This is the type of manhood which appeals to the Bengalees as probably as

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none other. Reckless in his sacrifice, unceasing in his activity, boundless in his love, profound and versatile in his wisdom, exuberant in his emotions, merciless in his attacks, but yet simple as a child — he was a rare personality in this world of ours.

And his love for his downtrodden people! That was ocean-like. Do you remember that message of his 'Say brothers, "The naked Indian, the paraiah Indian is my brother". Say brothers, at the top of your voice, "India's good is my good". And pray day and night, Oh, thou Lord of Gowri, Oh thou Mother of Strength,—take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness and make me a man!'

He took great pains to train his disciples and never attempted to cripple their individuality or curb their free thinking. To this end he would not keep a disciple near him for a long period. He used to say that under the shadow of one big tree another big tree could not possibly grow.

SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE.

* * * * * * *

Swami Vivekananda is one of those leading personages who contributed greatly to the awakening of modern India, while most of his contemporaries made their contribution through political or purely socio-religious work, Swami Vivekananda had the distinction of raising India spiritually in the eyes of the West. His interpretation of Vedanta to which he gave expression during his tour of the United States of America brought home to Western countries the richness of India's cultural heritage. On this occasion we must pay our humble tribute to the memory of that great Indian.

RAJENDRA PRASAD.

* * * * * * *

It was impossible to imagine Vivekananda in the second place. Wherever he went he was the first. His pre-eminent characteristic was kingliness. He was a born king and nobody ever came near him either in India or America without paying homage to his majesty. It was in vain that Vivekananda refused to accept such homage, judging himself severely and humiliating himself — everybody recognised in him at sight the leader, the anointed of God, the man marked with the stamp of the power to command. A traveller who crossed his path in the Himalayas without knowing who he was, stopped in amazement, and cried 'Shiva'. . . . It was as if his chosen God had imprinted His name upon his forehead.

He was less than forty years of age when he lay stretched upon the pyre. But the flame of that pyre is still alight today. From his ashes, like those of the Phoenix of old, has sprung anew the conscience of India — the magic bird — faith in her unity and in the Great Message, brooded over from Vedic Times by the drawing spirit of his ancient race — the message for which it must render account to the rest of mankind.

ROMAIN ROLLAND.

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॥ श्रीः ॥

नरेन्द्रो विवेकानन्दः

डाक्टर् वे. राघवः

VIVEKANANDA THE FOREMOST AMONG MEN

V. RAGHAVAN

[Dr V. Raghavan, M.A., PH.D. is a great scholar and Head of the Sanskrit Department, University of Madras, and used to contribute articles to the *Vedanta Kesari* in the past. Here is his homage to Swami Vivekananda on the occasion of his birth centenary. — *Ed.*]

यो रामकृष्णपरमहंसदयादृगिद्ध-
तेजाः, ततार लघु मारुतिवत्समुद्रान् ।
द्वीपान्तरेषु विषयग्रहवेगशान्त-
मध्यात्मदीपमुददीपयदार्षदीप्त्या ॥१॥

1. Reinforced in his powers by the grace of the look of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, he who, like Hanuman, lightly crossed the Seas; lighted in the far off continents, with the light of the Rishis, the spiritual lamp that had been blown off by the force of obsession of materialistic values.

[1]आरण्यभूमिषु यथेच्छविहारशाली
वेदान्तसिंह उरुविक्रमलङ्घिताशः ।
[2]गर्जत्विति स्वयमगर्जदभीर्नृसिंहो
यो ज्ञानमौपनिषदं प्रथयन् पृथिव्याम् ॥२॥

2. 'Roaming freely in the forests of the Upaniṣads, let the Lion of Vedanta, which, with its powerful movement, has encompassed all directions, roar!', — himself a lion among men, he who thus fearlessly roared, spreading the Upaniṣadic Knowledge over the world.

विघ्नानिवोर्मिविततीस्तरसा तरन् स्व-
मध्यास्य धैर्यमिव [3]पर्वतखण्डमञ्चौ ।
[4]कन्यापदे धृतसमाधिरवाप यश्च
दृष्टिं पुनर्भवकृते जगदात्मशक्तेः ॥३॥

3. Crossing quickly over the waves, as if the obstacles on his way, and taking his stand on the rock in the Sea, as it were on his own courage, he who, at the place (feet) of Kanya Kumari, sat in contemplation and obtained the vision for the regeneration of the spiritual force of the world.

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१ आरण्यशब्देन वनम्, आरण्यकाख्यः सवेदान्तो वेदभागश्चेति द्वयमप्यभिमतं भवति । भूमिशब्देन प्रदेशसामान्य योगभूमयश्च ।

२ 'Let the Lion of Vedanta roar!' इति प्रसिद्ध आघोषो विवेकानन्दस्य ।

३ The 'Vivekananda Rock'.

४ कन्याकुमारीस्थले, तस्या देव्याः चरणे च ।

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तत्रोपविश्य पुरतो विततामखण्डा-
माकन्यमातुहिनशैलमपश्यदेकाम् ।
यो [5]भारतीं भुवमनश्वरसंस्कृतिं ता-
[6]मावामदेवनिजदेशिकरामकृष्णम् ॥४॥

4. Seated there, he who saw, spread wide before, from Kanya to the Himalayas, the one unbroken Bharata land and Bharata culture, continuing undying from Sage Vamadeva (of the Rigveda) to his own Guru, Ramakrishna.

सुप्ताःस्थ किं भरतपुण्यभुवीह जाताः
किं दुर्बलाश्च कृपणाश्च निरुद्यमाश्च ।
[7]उत्तिष्ठतोच्चलत जाग्रत लब्धलक्ष्या
यावन्न मा विरमतेति च यो जुघोष ॥५॥

5, 6. He who exhorted, 'You sons born in this sacred land of Bharata! Why are you asleep? Why are you weak, wretched and without initiative? Arise, move on, awake, and as long as you have not obtained your goal, stop not —

आत्मैष नैव [8]बलहीनजनेन लभ्य
इत्यागमोक्तमवधत्त निरुद्यमानाम् ।
[9]लोकोऽस्ति नैष न परोऽप्यविषादयोगं
यः [10]पार्थसारथिरिवेत्थमबोधयन्नः ॥६॥

"This Self cannot be realized by one devoid of strength" — remember this saying of the Upaniṣad; 'for those devoid of effort, there is neither this world nor the other', — he who taught us this yoga of freedom from depression like the Lord at the helm of Arjuna's chariot.

क्वोक्तिः 'ततो न विजुगुप्सत' इत्युदारा
[11]क्वास्पृश्यतामयमतं बत हास्यमेतत् ।
[12]पूजालयेषु च कथं विपुला दरिद्र-
नारायणेषु विचरत्सु निरन्नवस्त्रम् ॥७॥

7. Where is that grand utterance (of the Upaniṣads) that 'one does not thereafter loathe anything'? and where is this present ridiculous religion full of the disease of touch-me-notism? How all this elaborate service in the temples when, without food or cloth, the 'Daridra Narayanas' are wandering on the streets!

बाह्यप्रपञ्चनविडम्बनडम्बरादि-
पांसुप्रपाततृणरोहखिलीकृतं नः ।
वेदान्तमान्तरमिहोद्धरतेत्युदीर्य
संदेशमस्य परमं भुवि यो व्यतानीत् ॥८॥

8. 'Resuscitate our real Vedanta here, which had been lost by the gathering of the dust and the weedy overgrowth of external, material elaborations and show' — Exhorting thus, he who spread the supreme message of the Vedanta in the world.

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५ भारतीमिति भुवमित्यनेन संस्कृतिमित्यनेन चान्वयः ।

६ वामदेवः प्रसिद्धो वेदर्षिर्मन्त्रद्रष्टा ।

७ 'उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत' इत्युपनिषदुक्तिमनु 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached' इति प्रसिद्धा विवेकानन्दस्य उक्तिः ।

८ 'नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्य' इति मुहुरुदाहृतं तेन औपनिषदं वाक्यम् ।

९ गीता. ४. ४०.

१० पार्थसारथिनिर्देशात् तदालयपवित्रितस्थलनिकटवर्तिनि 'Ice House' नाम्नि प्रासादे कैरविण्यां (Triplicane) विवेकानन्दस्य वासः सूचितो भवति ।

११ 'Touch-me-notism', इति विवेकानन्देन प्रहसितम् । अस्पृश्यतामयं मतं, तद्रूपं आमयभूतं मतमिति उभयथा योगः ।

१२ 'दरिद्रनारायण' शब्दश्च तेनैव दीनजनेषु तदुद्धारप्रोत्साहनार्थं प्रयुक्तः ।

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मठाश्रमाः शिष्यसङ्घाः १३ आत्मबोधजगद्धिते ।
दीक्षिता विश्वतो भान्ति यत्प्रेक्षायाः फलायिताः ॥९॥

9. 'For self-enlightenment and world-welfare'—with this as their dedicated mission, he whose Maths, Ashramas and pupils are flourishing all over the world, verily like the fruits of his farsight.

य श्रीशङ्करवत् मिता अपि समाः
प्राप्येह झञ्झामरु-
त्तुल्यस्तोलयति स्म विश्वम्, अखिलान्
व्यस्मापयद् वाग्झरैः ।
वेदान्तं पुनरुद्धार जनताखाध्यात्मिकीं वासनां
तस्यैतस्य धृतेऽपि नामनि शुभे को वा न
रोमाञ्चति ॥१०॥

10. He, who, like Sri Śankara himself, with only a few years of life here, shook the world like a tempest, and making everybody wonder-struck with his torrential eloquence, resurrected Vedanta again and thereby the spiritual sense in the people,—who will not thrill at the very utterance of his auspicious and shining name?

ज्ञानवीरः कर्मवीरो १४ राष्ट्रवीरश्च यो बभौ ।
तस्याधमर्णाः कतिधा न भवामोऽत्र भारते ॥११॥

11. He, who shone as a hero of Knowledge, a hero of action, a hero of the country (as patriot-monk), in how many ways are we not in debt to him in this land?

जातो नरेन्द्रो यः १५ ख्यात्या विवेकानन्दतां गतः ।
नरेन्द्राः स्याम १६ तत्स्मृत्या विवेकानन्द-
लाभतः ॥१२॥

12. He, who was born as Narendra and by his realization (renown) became Vivekananda, by his thoughts now (on the occasion of his Centenary), may we become foremost men with the acquisition of the bliss of discriminate knowledge!

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१३ "आत्मनो मोक्षार्थं जगद्धिताय च" इति श्रीरामकृष्णमठसंघयो: (Mission) लक्ष्यवाक्यं (motto) तेनैव दत्तम् ।

१४ स्वप्रकटदेशभक्त्या यः 'Patriot Monk' इत्याहृत आसित् ।

१५ प्रसिद्ध्या ज्ञानेन च ।

१६ तज्जन्मशताब्दीमहोत्सव इति वाक्यशेषः ।

Religion is not, and never can be, in the field of intellect. Intellectual reasoning is based on facts evident to the senses. Now religion has nothing to do with the senses.... All great prophets and seers claim to have 'seen God'. That is to say, they have had direct experience. There is no knowledge without experience, and man has to see God in his own soul. When man has come face to face with the one great fact in the universe, then alone will doubts vanish and crooked things become straight. This is 'seeing God'. Our business is to verify, not to swallow. Religion, like other sciences, requires you to gather facts, to see for yourself, and this is possible when you go beyond the knowledge which lies in the region of the five senses. Religious truths need verification by everyone.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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SO-CALLED CONTRADICTIONS IN SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TEACHINGS

SWAMI SUDDHANANDA

[Swami Suddhananda, a disciple of Swamiji, joined the Order soon after Swamiji's return from the West (in 1897). He was not only loved by Swamiji but had faith in his capacity to work out his ideas, and therefore Swamiji entrusted him with works of utmost importance. Swami Suddhananda lived with Swamiji for a long time, and imbibed Swamiji's message and ideas; as such his understanding of them is of great value for us today. He was the second General Secretary of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and its fifth President. This article is reproduced from *Prabuddha Bharata*, January, 1931. — *Ed.*]

In the pregnant words with which Swamiji begins his book, *Raja-Yoga*, breathing a most catholic and all-embracing spirit, the Swami Vivekananda has put forth his ideas about the methods of individual spiritual culture for all mankind. These sentences came out spontaneously in course of the explanation of an aphorism of Patanjali, incorporated in his monumental work on Raja-Yoga, and they apparently appealed so much to the Swamiji himself that he placed them as the motto of his book called *Raja-Yoga*. His four books on the four Yogas, viz., *Jnana-Yoga*, *Raja-Yoga*, *Karma-Yoga* and *Bhakti-Yoga*, into which he wanted to roughly classify the different methods of spiritual culture, are but the amplification of the above sentences, giving emphasis to each, when that was dealt separately.

This is, in short, what may be termed Swamiji's scheme of individual salvation; but besides the above four books many epistles of Swamiji, some at least of which he never intended for publication, and many interviews with different individuals have been published and recorded, as also many public lectures addressed to vast gatherings, specially of his own country-men, in which we find here and there instructions for individual spiritual culture, but mainly his ideas of collective advancement, social uplift, national regeneration and so forth. The latter class of books are much more widely read by the general public, and through that reading they form an estimate of what Swamiji wanted for the world in general, and for his country in particular. Especially his idea of the Seva of Narayana in different human forms, has caught the imagination of his countrymen and it is the mainspring of many charitable and educational organizations under the auspices of the Ramakrishna Mission and of other bodies. Many of the suggestions put forth in the above-mentioned writings have not as yet been attempted to be translated into action by any individual or organization, though we hope, as time rolls on, attention will be drawn also to those aspects of Swamiji's teachings and big institutions will spring forth from them. The mainspring has given rise to innumerable diversified currents and sometimes perhaps it is difficult to recognize their original source. It is difficult, for instance, for many to find out, whether Swamiji was a champion of orthodoxy or social reform; whether he was a staunch advocate of political freedom — whether he was a nationalist or an internationalist; whether he was an advocate of the caste system or against it; whether he was a supporter of vegetarianism or meat-eating; whether he advised meditation in solitude or work in the bustle of society as the best method of realizing God; whether he favoured organization, or wanted individual spiritual culture in preference to any organization, etc., etc. As one traverses the pages of the big seven * volumes of his works, one is rather apt to be puzzled.

We, who had the good fortune to be in close touch with Swamiji, — from 1897, the date of his triumphant entry into Calcutta, his birth-place, after his spiritual conquest in the West, to 1902, the date of the giving up of

* Now in eight volumes.—Ed.

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his physical frame, — had also occasions to be puzzled by his apparently contradictory teachings, but Swamiji himself supplied us with the key to his proper understanding. There were also many who did not even hesitate to affirm that his teachings were against those of his revered Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

I will quote here several utterances of Swamiji and describe several incidents from his life, which will probably help the reader to find out the master-key to all the apparently contradictory teachings of the great Swami. The one conclusion to which I have arrived regarding them is that they are all of them true under different circumstances, as being addressed to different individuals or groups of individuals; their difference lies only in emphasis laid on particular occasions on particular ideas or courses of action.

I will try to record the different incidents, not in any systematic order, but as they come to my mind.

It was the month of May of 1897. I had joined the Alambazar Math only a few days before. Swamiji had just returned from Darjeeling where he had gone with some of his Gurubhais and Madrasi disciples. In the monastery then lived only three or four senior Swamis — his Gurubhais, and about a dozen newly initiated junior Swamis and Brahmacharins. Up to that time there was no hard and fast rule of discipline in the Math. His Gurubhais were perfectly free and they practised *sādhana* individually or jointly as the spirit prompted them. But now some new elements were admitted and one of the junior Swamis, an old person, suggested to Swamiji that it would be good if he framed some rules and regulations for the training and discipline of the new-comers, before he departed for Almora. Swamiji at once consented and calling all the members to the parlour of the monastery dictated a few rules as to meditation, study, work, physical exercise, etc. But before he dictated those rules, he prefaced them with a short lecture to the following effect:

'Our aim is to go beyond all laws — beyond all rules and regulations. That is the idea — specially of a Sannyasin. Still I remember a pregnant saying of our Master: "If you are pricked by a thorn, it is advised that another thorn should be secured with which you will try to extricate the former. But as soon as it has been done, there is no necessity to keep the thorn you have procured. You may throw away both as you have got rid of the trouble." Similar is the scope and necessity of rules and regulations. You have to go beyond all laws — beyond all rules and regulations. You are Ātman — ever free, blessed and eternal; you are to live a spontaneous life, urged by the perfect freedom and the purity of spirit. But, my children, unfortunately you are at present under some bad laws — bad rules and regulations of your life; you are under the sway of some bad habits. In order to extricate yourself from your evil nature — this thorn of bad laws — let there be framed some good laws for the present; but always remember that you are ultimately to go beyond them both.'

* * *

A few months after, about the end of 1897, Swamiji was travelling in Rajputana with a few of his Sannyasi and Brahmachari disciples. With the exception of one or two, none had any objection to meat-eating. We were the guests of the Raja of Khetri (about 90 miles from Jeypore) at his Jeypore house. The Raja who was then at Khetri had made all arrangements for Swamiji and his disciples through his men. Of course, meat diet was arranged for Swamiji himself. When the Raja's men asked Swamiji as to what kind of food was to be arranged for his disciples, he at once replied that they were all vegetarians. So all the disciples were obliged to take vegetarian diet while at Jeypore. One of the Brahmacharins, who was older than the others, and being fortunate enough to see Sri Ramakrishna himself and being acquainted with his direct disciples for a long time used to take liberties

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with Swamiji, who, however, instead of being offended thereby rather enjoyed them playfully, requested Swamiji that he be pleased to allow them meat diet at least twice a week. Swamiji was inexorable and did not change the routine. He, however, occasionally called that Brahmacharin and also another to partake of his Prasad consisting of meat. At Khetri the rule was relaxed. But one Brahmacharin who was a vegetarian for a long time past, never broke his vow of not taking meat, and Swamiji one day praised him with the remark that if he could stick to that vow for twelve years continually he would become perfect — a Siddha.

* * *

It was more than a year since Swamiji had returned from the West for the first time. It was the beginning of the year 1898. The monastery had been removed from Alambazar to Belur and was situated at the commodious rented house belonging then to the late Babu Nilambar Mukherji of Kashmir fame. The present site of the permanent monastery had just been purchased. After the return of Swamiji from the West, the life of the monastery had undergone some revolutionary changes. New ideas had been introduced, and new sorts of activities had been initiated as the outcome of Swamiji's Western experience. The old ideas of Pujas and festivals were, as it were, in the melting pot.

It was the Shivaratri day — dedicated to fast and the worship of Shiva and vigil in the night. In the olden days, the monastic disciples of Sri Ramakrishna observed this occasion with special Pujas, music and enthusiastic Sankirtan throughout the whole day and night. But this year none — neither the old Swamis nor the new Brahmachari and Sannyasi disciples — had fasted, and everyone had come to partake of Prasad at the call of bell. A young Brahmin Brahmacharin was a little late. In the meantime Swamiji suddenly remembered that this was the holy Shivaratri day and noticed also that none had fasted. He had begun to talk about the matter, when the above mentioned Brahmacharin appeared there and was going to sit with the others to partake prasad, but Swamiji intervened and asked, 'Are you accustomed to fast, my child?' 'Yes, holy Swami,' replied he. 'Then, observe Shivaratri. Of course, you need not fast totally, you may partake of some fruit Prasad, if there is any and you need not also keep vigil for the whole night. You may partake of your meals after midnight, when you have finished the first two Pujas (one at 9 p.m. and the other at 12 p.m.).' The Brahmacharin obeyed his Master's directions and was assisted only by another Brahmacharin who though himself unable to fast on account of poor health, helped him in the Puja and kept the vigil up to midnight.

* * *

A young man joined the monastery and lived with Swamiji for a considerable period at the newly constructed Belur Math. His devotional side was then not much developed. He happened to halt at Benares for a few days on his journey further up. It was the year 1900. The Benares Home of Service was then just started by a few ardent young men who at that time read much of Swamiji's teachings but did not come into intimate personal contact with him. They were very much impressed by Swamiji's exhortations about the service of poor 'Narayanas' and started the institution which was then known as 'Poor Men's Relief Association' with the help of a few kind friends. They all naturally asked the newcomer as to Swamiji's real views about the respective merits of the different paths of realization when the latter gave out the following: 'Swamiji's real views are that image-worship and such other things are absolutely useless and Jiva-seva is the only method of attaining to the highest.' Most of them were very much pleased as it tallied perfectly with their activities at that time. One of them, however, who was of a devotional and rather vacillating temperament, was not perfectly satisfied; he put the same question to another monk, who happened to be at Benares on a short visit sometime after the other had come, and who had lived a longer period with Swamiji and

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was of a rather liberal outlook having known varying forms of religious practices such as Yoga, Bhakti, etc. The monk answered, 'I have found Swamiji advocating different kinds of religious practices for different natures — such as Yoga, Jñāna, Bhakti and Karma.' At this the Benares workers divulged to the new Swami what the other represented as the Swamiji's views. Some time after, both these Swamis who represented Swamiji's views to the Benares boys were sitting in a question class held at the Belur Math with Swamiji himself as the teacher to solve the doubts of his disciples. Swamiji was expressing himself in a liberal strain, saying that all paths — whether Yoga, Bhakti, Jñāna or Karma, led to the same goal. The Swami with the liberal outlook remembered the Benares incident and being encouraged by Swamiji's utterances thought of administering a rebuke by Swamiji himself to the other Swami, who, he thought, totally misrepresented his real views to the Benares boys. He said to Swamiji, 'Swamiji, this Swami has told the Benares workers that you hold the view that image-worship and such other things are absolutely useless and that it is Jiva-Seva alone which leads to the highest goal.' He was sure that Swamiji would reproach the other Swami with misrepresenting his views, but he was totally disappointed. Swamiji did not directly answer him; he rather said aside, 'At present one must, of course, give stress on Karma,' and did not say anything further on the matter.

* * *

Swamiji, some of his Gurubhais and some newly initiated Sannyasins and Brahmacharins were sitting in the visitor's room in the Belur Math. One of his Gurubhais asked Swamiji: 'Swamiji, your sayings and teachings contain so many apparently contradictory things that these youngmen are often at a loss to understand what to do or what not to do.' Swamiji, not replying directly to his Gurubhai, said to the disciples present: 'You see, my children, I am a religious preacher. So I have to say different things to different persons according as the occasion arises. Why should you feel yourself obliged to act according to all my different instructions? Do you not see, my Gurubhais do not always follow me, though I tell them many things? Whenever anyone of you feel puzzled as to how to act on a particular occasion or need guidance in your personal spiritual culture, come to me in private and ask my opinion and advice.'

* * *

A short time before Swamiji's passing away, he received a letter from a young Swami, who was then away from the Math practising Tapasya, that he had been written by the head of a certain centre of the Order to the effect that Swamiji had ordered him to join that centre immediately as a worker. But as he had an ardent desire to visit Amarnath in Kashmir he wanted permission for that. If Swamiji, however, so desired, he was quite ready to obey him and join the centre immediately as ordered. Swamiji at once instructed a member of the Math to write to him as well as the head of the centre referred to. The Swami, who had desired to visit Amarnath, was told that Swamiji never ordered anyone to do any work, so he might visit Amarnath and also make pilgrimage to any other holy place he liked; and afterwards if he felt so inclined he might go to the centre as a worker. And the head of the centre was informed that he had totally misrepresented Swamiji by using his name in the matter and writing to the young Swami that he was ordered to join the centre immediately. The Swami in question, visiting Amarnath as also some other holy places, joined that centre shortly after as a worker and served it very usefully for about four years.

(To be continued)

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THREE MOMENTOUS DECISIONS

SWAMI KAILASANANDA

[Swami Kailasananda, President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Madras, in this brief article takes us, when we are celebrating Swamiji's birth centenary, to the source, the ocean, viz. Sri Ramakrishna which set forth on the world the tidal wave of spirituality in the form of Swami Vivekananda. — *Ed.*]

जन्म कर्म च मे दिव्यं एवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥

"He who thus knows, in true light, My divine birth and action, leaving the body, is not born again; he attains to Me, O Arjuna."

Gita, IV, 9.

The birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda has sent a thrill of joy, admiration and reflection all over the country and even abroad. Expected and unexpected quarters are organizing celebrations and commemorating the event in all possible ways. Doubtless this will conduce to the welfare of humanity at large.

On further reflection one may wonder, if behind this round of celebrations there are not the three momentous decisions or resolutions, which though apparently innocent, are of far reaching consequence to all thoughtful persons, at the present moment. The three decisions were made by Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swami Vivekananda — the trinity of the Ramakrishna Order — who along with the galaxy of Apostles headed by Swami Brahmananda, endearingly called Sri Sri Maharaj have indeed ushered in a new age of history. We shall note them one by one below.

1. Sri Ramakrishna, then known as Gadadhar or endearingly called Gadai, decided not to prosecute his academic studies further at the Chatuspathi or the Sanskrit School started by his revered eldest brother, Sri Ramakumar, at Jhamapukur, a suburb of Calcutta, for improving the material prospects of the family. The diminishing returns of income of the family were threatening Ramakumar, the eldest male member of the family; but when he asked Gadadhar with all solicitousness to be diligent in his studies for the sake of all the near and dear ones left behind at Kamarpukur, he was confused with the strange reply he received: 'What shall I do with this bread-winning education, Brother? I will rather go in for that education which will illumine my heart for ever and give me everlasting peace and bliss of mind. I have no interest in this system of education.' We do not know what reaction this reply had on Ramakumar's mind. However, the subsequent history of Sri Ramakrishna's life, as the world knows, shows how faithfully he carried out this resolution, for his personal enlightenment as well as for the edification of humanity.

2. The second great decision was that of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, — the decision to live the life of a nun, which was given out when she was asked by Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar in 1872, as to her plan of life. She was eighteen then. 'Do you want to drag me down into Māyā? I have already given my heart and soul to the Divine Mother. But I don't question your just claims on me,' said Sri Ramakrishna to the Holy Mother once, during her first visit to Dakshineswar, — a meeting that occurred after a long period of separation. 'Why should I do that?' came the unhesitating reply, 'I have come only to help you in the path of religious life. It will be enough if I am permitted to serve you in my humble way.'

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This was a reply which one of immaculate purity of mind alone could spontaneously give to her adored husband. How the Holy Mother served the Master till the moment of his passing away and helped him to carry on his mission, while she looked so solicitously after his body and how also she fulfilled the mission of Sri Ramakrishna till the last day of her own life, are facts known to the readers of their biographies. It is true that she is still serving Sri Ramakrishna and his mission though in a subtle way. Suffice it to say that this act of decision, so significant to mankind, is unparalleled in the history of the world.

3. Narendranath, the future Swami Vivekananda decided to become a Sannyasin in 1884. It may be interesting to note how even earlier as he would fall asleep two strikingly dissimilar visions of life would appear before his mind's eye : one the life of *preyas*, the worldly life of comfort, ease, luxury and enjoyment of the senses in the right royal style, and the other the picture of the Sannyasin, wandering resourceless, with Almighty as the only resource, eating such food as chance might bring ; resting at night, — as he himself wrote in his masterly poem, 'The Song of the Sannyasin', — under the canopy of the sky in the forest or on the mountainside. However, the further inward he would delve, the worldly ideal would fade. At length his choice was Sannyas — the renunciation of desire — as the only way to gain the vision of God. It is a matter of common knowledge now, how this Lion among men afterwards became a Prince of Sannyasins bearing the unforgettable name Swami Vivekananda and shed lustre on the very principle of Sannyas. Of course in his decision to renounce he received substantial help from Sri Ramakrishna. And his renouncing had a tremendous value in more than one way. One of which was that he brought about a re-orientation of Sannyas for the uplift of the masses, बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय, which fact is known all the world over.

The philosophy of Avatāravāda is difficult of comprehension. In the Incarnations one notices a mysterious blending of the human and the divine aspects. The famous poet's remarks : 'Who can know the minds of Superhuman Souls, harder than diamond but softer than flower ?' * are too true of Avatars. Bhagavan Śri Krishna has himself said, 'Nobody knows me'. मां तु वेद न कश्चन। The ordinary man has not the asset, spiritual and intellectual, to appraise an Avatar correctly. His conventional yardstick of intelligence does not go far. As it is difficult to understand the spiritual or divine aspect of an Incarnation, an humble attempt has been made here to contemplate on one out of the innumerable points of approach to the Avatar's human aspect, which, it is hoped, may give some wholesome food for reflection to those who will choose to have it.

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* वज्रादपि कठोराणि मृदूनि कुसुमादपि
लोकोत्तराणां चेतांसि को नु विज्ञातुमर्हति ॥

Prophets preach, but the Incarnations like Jesus, Buddha, Ramakrishna, can give religion ; one glance, one touch is enough. That is the power of the Holy Ghost, the 'laying on of hands' ; the power was actually transmitted to the disciples by the Master — the 'chain of Guru power'. That, the real baptism, has been handed down for untold ages.

Get the mercy of God and of His greatest children ; these are the two chief ways to God. The company of these children of light is very hard to get ; five minutes in their company will change a whole life, and if you really want it enough, one will come to you.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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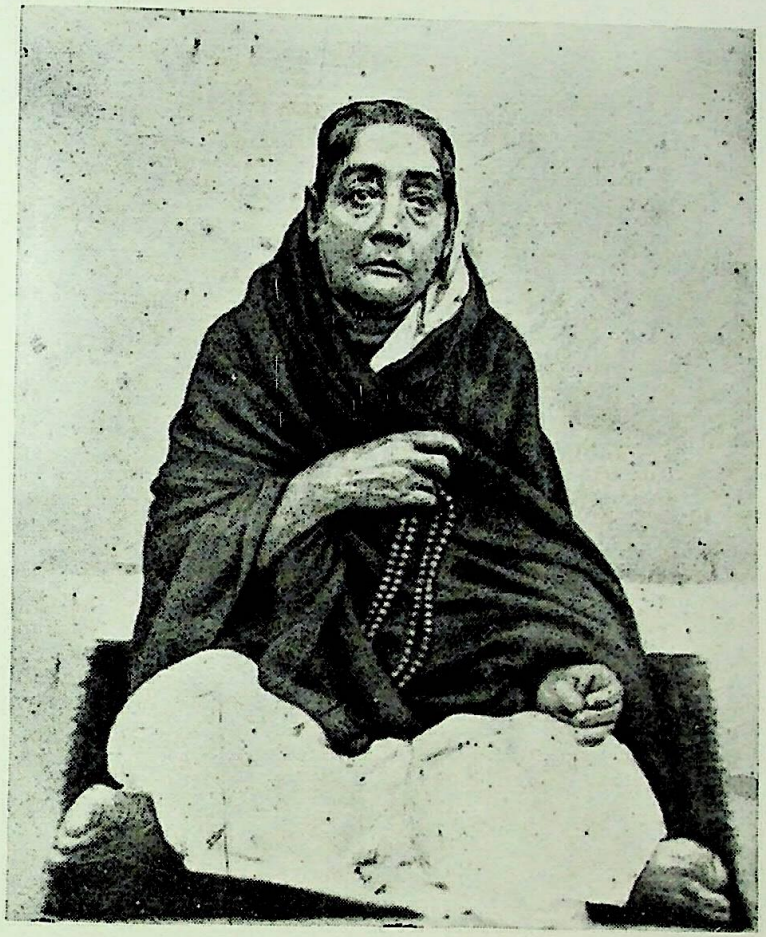

BHUVANESHWARI DEVI
(Swami Vivekananda's Mother)

"My Mother fasted and prayed for years and years that I would be born."

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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At the Parliament of Religions, Chicago.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE COMMON MAN OF INDIA

SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

[Swami Nikhilananda is Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York. As the translator of the Bengali book *Kathamrita,* into English titled the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna,* he is widely known. He has also translated the important Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita with copious notes into English. In this thought-provoking article he deals with Swamiji's love for the common man of India and feelingly depicts how, still, the common men in India, compared with those of other Western countries, specially those of Russia, are in a sorry plight and need our immediate attention. — *Ed.*]

One hundred years ago a great soul assumed a human body and dedicated himself to the proposition that every man is potentially divine and that the goal of evolution is to manifest this divinity. Swami Vivekananda's devotees and admirers all over the world are dedicating the centenary of his birth in many befitting ways. But can we really dedicate an occasion already sanctified by his own dedication to the noblest ideal ever conceived by the human mind? Is it in our power to add to its sanctity by our words or deeds? It would rather be proper for us to dedicate ourselves to carrying out the mission for which he worked, lived, and died. What we say or write during this centenary year will in course of time be forgotten. But the ideal that Swami Vivekananda bequeathed to future generations will, for centuries to come, give people everywhere an impetus to dedicate themselves to the attainment of self-knowledge through service to humanity in whatever area it is needed : material, intellectual, or spiritual.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* teaches that God is born as a man whenever there is a decline of religion and a triumph of wickedness. The God-man resuscitates spiritual values for the preservation of society. Religion was at a low ebb during the nineteenth century and materialistic ideas prevailed. This gave the signal for the advent of Sri Ramakrishna, who chose Swami Vivekananda as his chief instrument to fulfil his world mission.

What are the symptoms of the present world malady? Science and technology, developed especially in the West during the last three centuries, and more importantly, the mind that works behind them, have obscured people's vision concerning the reality of God or Cosmic Intelligence and the true nature of the soul and the universe. They are unaware of the spiritual basis of love and sympathy, which bind together the diverse temperaments in a society, and of the validity of the different faiths as ways to discover the eternal relationship between the eternal soul and the eternal Godhead. As a result, the scientifically oriented mind does not accept the reality of anything which is not perceived by the sense organs and demonstrated by reason based on the data supplied by them. Science gives a purely materialistic interpretation of the universe and of man, who, in its view, has been produced by the blind method of evolution, through adaptation to environment and natural selection and is without any spiritual future. Consequently life in society is motivated by competition, which at its best is enlightened self-interest and, at its worst, crass selfishness. Fear, ill-will, suspicion, and hatred are poisoning human relationships everywhere. Man is not at peace with himself, with his fellow beings, with the universe, or with his Creator. A new world war, controlled by science and technology, will leave hardly a single human soul to enjoy their fruits. The world malady, in short, is a spiritual one. Economic maladjustment, political unrest, and moral confusion are only its outer symptoms.

Again, religion generally claims the exclusive right of conferring salvation, and has become cluttered with superstitions. Teach-

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ings of ministers and priests are often too dogmatic and narrow to satisfy man's heart and soul, driving rational seekers to agnosticism, atheism, or scientific humanism.

To combat these evils, Swami Vivekananda preached the timeless truths of Vedanta, which he verified by his own experiences : the reality of God, the solidarity of man, the oneness of existence, and the harmony of religions. He showed men how to integrate the conclusions of human knowledge — scientific, philosophical, and religious — all of which open on the horizon of the Infinite and Eternal. He also demonstrated how the disciplines of intellect, work, love, and self-control can, each of them or all together, bring out the hidden divinity of man.

Swami Vivekananda's mission was both national and international ; it was world-wide. His sensitive heart bled at the sight of suffering everywhere. Misery in any form bruised his soul. But he chose as his special task the uplift of Indian humanity. An India free from bondage and misery would help other countries to become truly free. In this article I propose to deal with Swami Vivekananda's Indian mission.

The plight of India's Common Man.

For six years following Sri Ramakrishna's death, Swami Vivekananda travelled as a wandering monk throughout India, from the snow-clad Himalayas to Cape Comorin — often on foot, sometimes living in palaces with Maharajas, sometimes discussing the scriptures and philosophy with erudite scholars, and sometimes sharing meagre meals and lodgings with the poor and lowly, but always particular about the practice of spiritual disciplines. At this time he was perhaps not quite sure of the central purpose of his life. Naturally the desire often flashed in his mind to strive for personal salvation, following the traditional disciplines of meditation, solitude, and the practice of austerities. But somehow the idea did not strike a response from his deepest soul. Then he remembered the admonition of Sri Ramakrishna to forego the joy of personal salvation and dedicate himself to the service of humanity. He must act as a large steamship to carry weary souls across the pain-fraught ocean of the world to the other shore of freedom and joy.

The pitiable condition of India's common man, descended from the great seers and saints, who had once walked free with head up-raised, touched Swami Vivekananda deeply. He saw how, as a result of the exploitation of ruthless foreign rulers, powerful landlords, and selfish priests, his very soul was crushed by ignorance, illness, and poverty. But the Swami also remembered the great service rendered by the priests in preserving Hinduism under the most trying circumstances during the foreign domination of India. The priests in Hindu temples are, by and large, in a pitiable condition at the present time on account of ignorance and poverty. But when their economic condition improves and when they are properly trained about their duties, they will discharge them with dignity and understanding. The priests and ministers in the Catholic and Protestant churches assume their offices only after being trained. As long as rituals remain an integral part of religion, the office of priest cannot be abolished.

Swami Vivekananda was amazed to find that, notwithstanding persecution and poverty, the Indian masses were patient, gentle, and God-fearing. Many years later Mahatma Gandhi felt the same way when he said : 'I have travelled from one end of the country to the other and I have seen miserable specimens of humanity with their lustreless eyes. They are India. In these humble cottages in the midst of these dungheaps are to be found the humble folk in whom you find the concentrated essence of wisdom.' Both of these patriots saw the material poverty and the spiritual wealth of their people and resolved to remove the poverty and strengthen the spirituality. Like Abraham Lincoln, Swami Vivekananda believed that the common man must be good because God had made so many like him. To bring to the masses of India education, food, and health became his all-absorbing

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passion by day and his ever-haunting dream by night. Once this huge leviathan was awakened from its slumber, no power on earth could stop India's onward march along with other progressive nations of the world.

In the course of his wide travels in India, Swami Vivekananda further discovered that it was not religion, but the falsehood, superstition, and hypocrisy generally practised in the name of religion that had caused her material decline. Loyalty to the teachings of the scriptures, prophets, and saints, on the other hand, had preserved Indian culture through centuries of foreign rule and other vicissitudes of history, whereas many powerful nations had disintegrated under similar conditions. It was neither destiny nor God's will that was responsible for India's miserable condition. God is the same to all. He does not hate one nor favour another. God's will operates through man's actions and thoughts. The righteous feel His benevolent power and the wicked term Him as inauspicious. Destiny is nothing but the unseen result of our past action which influences our present. The evil result of the past can be nullified by the good action of the present. India's misery was man-made and could be eradicated by man's effort and intelligence. He firmly believed that the dissemination of the Vedantic truths among the masses would give them muscles of iron and nerves of steel and bring out the infinite strength that lies potential in every man. Hitherto these truths were the exclusive property of saints and scholars. He wanted to broadcast them among the people at large. He saw the tragic lesson of Indian history : how high an individual could rise and how low a nation could fall. In the West an individual might not have reached the supreme height of a Buddha or a Ramakrishna, but to whatever level he attained, he carried his fellow men with him.

India's immediate task, Swami Vivekananda was convinced, was to learn from the West the secrets of science, technology, and organization, which are what have given its common man his present prosperity, power, and security. It was mainly for that purpose that he came to America in 1893 and later travelled in Europe. He seems to have been dazzled at first by the material grandeur of the West, but before long his keen mind discovered the impending crisis which would befall it through its acceptance of uninspired and selfish materialism. In stern words he asked the Christians to go back to the genuine teachings of Christ. The two great wars of our time have fully justified his forebodings. No doubt Westerners enjoyed physical happiness ; but few had inner peace. He therefore wanted the Indians to shun the naked materialism of the West and learn from it rather the secrets of producing those physical necessaries indispensable to building a stable foundation for India's national life. On this might be raised the superstructure of her cultural edifice with its dome penetrating the realm of spirit. If India neglected her spiritual values and directed her energy exclusively to political or economic purposes, Swami Vivekananda warned, she would perish. Even if she survived she would be, at best, a poor imitation of the West.

Through his speeches and writings Swami Vivekananda has given plans for India's national renascence. The masses should be given the right food and education to develop their bodies and minds. For this purpose patriotic men and women should visit the poor in their huts, open free schools for them, bring them knowledge of improved agriculture and of the arts and crafts, teach them cleanliness and sanitation, help them with medicine, tell them about the outside world, and at the same time remind them of their spiritual heritage so that they could discard the many superstitions which have encrusted Hinduism. Thus they would learn how to bring out their inner divinity through healthy bodies and alert minds. Any attempt to teach metaphysics to empty stomachs was sheer madness. How fervently he said that unselfish service to man is the real worship of God. He called the common man of India the ' Daridra-Narayana,' God in the form of the poor. Time and again he emphasized the fact that no great work is

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ever done through cleverness. It is honesty, integrity, and hard work that make a nation truly great. Workers for India's regeneration must renounce jealousy, selfishness, greed, and lust for power.

Incessantly the Swami wrote to his Indian followers about the regeneration of the masses. In a letter dated 1894 he said :

> 'Let each one of us pray, day and night, for the downtrodden millions in India, who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft, and tyranny — pray day and night for them... I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. I am poor, I love the poor... Who feels in India for the three hundred millions of men and women sunken forever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out? Who feels for them? Let these people be your God — think of them, work for them, pray for them incessantly — the Lord will show you the way. Him I call a mahatma, a noble soul, whose heart bleeds for the poor. Otherwise he is a duratma, a wicked soul... So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them.'

Swami Vivekananda saw in America, with his own eyes, what human efforts, intelligence, and earnestness could accomplish to banish poverty, superstition, squalor, disease, and other handicaps to human well-being from society. In one of his letters, dated August 20, 1893, he wrote to a devotee in India :

> 'Gird up your loins, my boys!... The hope lies in you — in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful. Feel for the miserable and look up for help — it shall come. I have travelled twelve years with this load in my heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from door to door of the so-called rich and great. With a bleeding heart I have crossed half the world to this strange land, seeking help... I may perish of cold and hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you young men this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed... Go down on your faces before Him and make a great sacrifice, the sacrifice of a whole life for them, for whom He comes from time to time, whom He loves above all — the poor, the lowly, the oppressed.'

The Swami reminded the Indians that their national ideals are renunciation and service, and if their thoughts and actions flowed through these twin channels, the rest would take care of itself. A lover of India, he said, must give up the desire for personal aggrandizement and dedicate himself to the service of the common man. He should also rid himself of the national habit of blind imitation and dependence upon others, and above all of the national sins of jealousy and lack of discipline.

Swami Vivekananda was in a sense a condensed India. He regarded her as the playground of his childhood, the pleasure grove of his youth, and the sacred Varanasi of his old age. The Motherland, which is none other than the mother, was to him superior to heaven itself. He fervently cherished the dream of India's political freedom. Foreign domination is the mother of many national evils. The rulers exploit the material resources of the country and impose upon the people their own culture, customs, and ways of life. Slavery breeds jealousy, fear, malice, and servile dependence. Under foreign rule the development of the national culture is arrested. Thus, from the cultural standpoint, the British period of Indian history is a sterile one. Lord Macaulay, in introducing the English language as the medium of higher education, said that his purpose was to make educated Indians appear like Englishmen in all possible respects except colour of skin, which could not be changed. Anglicized Indians imitated their rulers in art, literature, architecture, and dress, and in many other respects. They moved away from the common man and became indifferent to his weal and woe. The English exploitation of the physical resources of the land was superficial, but their exploitation of the mind went deep. It will take years before English-oriented Indians rediscover their own

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cultural treasures. A top leader of the freedom movement and afterwards of free India said to me very sadly that India had very little hope as long as Westernized Indians controlled the country's education and administration.

Independence and After

After a struggle of about half a century India at last attained freedom in 1947. The political situation in the outside world was a major factor in this attainment. Freedom came to India perhaps too easily, without intense discipline and sacrifice on the part of the people. Some of the great leaders of the national struggle for the country's emancipation would perhaps be startled to see the present developments, such as the quarrel over languages and the boundaries of the states, to mention only two. There is a parallel in the French Revolution. Few people in 1789, and least of all the French revolutionaries themselves, had any idea that out of the Paris Commune's Goddess of Reason would spring the bourgeois capitalistic system and the ideals of private enterprise. The magnificent motto 'Liberty, equality, and fraternity,' which was uttered in specific denial of the European feudal view of bonded peasants as a lower type of social animal, should also have been applied, later, to the coloured people of the French colonies.

Mere political liberty, as it is generally understood today, is not the cure for all national evils. True liberty should lead to greater freedom of mind and spirit. When a country tastes real freedom its very stones vibrate with new energy, joy, and hope. Since 1947 the Government of India, and private organizations as well, have been working to raise the living standard of the common man. There is no doubt that improvements are to be seen here and there; but as far as the lot of the masses is concerned, they are not very significant. To be sure, official statistics give an optimistic picture. We are told that people are eating more food and getting better medical care. Schools and colleges are increasing in numbers. But statistics can conceal the real facts. No doubt, in cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, one finds high buildings, fashionable houses where hospitality is lavishly shown, and modern hotels where foreign tourists and rich people eat sumptuous meals and enjoy modern comforts. But do these not stick out like sore thumbs in the midst of India's slums and poverty? Once Lenin laid down the rule that no one should have cake unless everyone had bread. Mahatma Gandhi, too, wanted to limit the maximum income of the individual until the general economic standard of the country was raised. How deeply the various plans have touched the life of the common people who form the overwhelming majority of the population is open to question. There exists in India a great disparity between the income of the few rich and that of the many poor, between the luxuries of the one and the penury of the other. The food of the common man is meagre, and the living standard extremely low. Illiteracy and sickness are widespread. Beggars roam the streets. In large cities hundreds of people are seen sleeping on the steps of big buildings and on the sidewalks. Garbage often piles up at street corners and in the poorer quarters. Slums breed disease. Many towns still have open drains. The houses of the poor and even of the middle class do not have proper ventilation and sunlight. Living quarters are overcrowded. Roads in the villages are still in a primitive condition. Students who have finished their education are often frustrated because of the lack of proper jobs. In a word, India is many years behind even the small countries of Europe regarding the bare necessaries of life. No wonder that the West speaks of India as an 'underdeveloped' country — a stigma that many educated Indians easily accept. The visible poverty and illness of the Indian masses are noticed by foreigners, who often question the practical utility of the grand philosophy and religion of India. This condition of the Indian masses has largely nullified the impression created by our scholars at foreign univer-

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sities or by our politicians at international conferences or by our scientists at scientific meetings. India came twice under foreign rule because the masses, weakened by the negligence and the exploitation of the upper classes, could not offer resistance to the invaders. A chain is as strong as its weakest link.

No one will deny that India's problems — created by factors like the foreign domination of the country for about a thousand years and distortion of the religious and social systems — are deep and multifarious. Further, the abnormal political condition of the world slows down constructive national work. But all the progressive countries, great and small, have had to face similar problems. If right plans are made, and the leaders entrusted with their execution prove their absolute honesty, people will cheerfully do their share. Did not hundreds of thousands of men and women enthusiastically follow Mahatma Gandhi's leadership? The caste system and religion, which preserved Hindu Society and built up Indian culture, are often pointed out as obstacles in the path of India's progress. To be sure, both need correction. This, however, will not come through criticism and abuse but through right education. Let people be given the opportunity to study India's spiritual culture as embodied in the *Upaniṣads*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *Mahābhārata*, side by side with science, philosophy, and the social and economic systems of the West, and they will easily give up what is incompatible with the advancement of the country in the modern world.

In the concluding verse of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* Sri Krishna speaks of the cooperation between the military and the spiritual power as the way to India's 'fortune, victory, prosperity, and right conduct.' In the first verse of the fourth chapter He refers to the decline of yoga or spiritual culture. Commenting on this, Śankarāchārya says that the military power derives its strength from the storehouse of spirituality. The righteousness of society is preserved when the military and the spiritual powers nourish each other. Today in 'secular' India this cooperation is lacking, which fact is responsible for much of her confusion. Let the spiritual culture of India be taught at every level of education. Thus, the workers for India's uplift will feel genuine pride in her mission and will have a song to sing. Moreover, some sort of compulsory military training for youth will infuse their actions, thoughts, and words with discipline and orderliness. These two measures will go a great way toward solving India's multifarious problems.

Indians Abroad

For the past fifteen years, thousands of Indians, both men and women, have been going every year to Europe and America. Among them one finds business men, tourists, government officials, research scholars, social workers, distinguished men on the cultural exchange programmes, and a large number of students. Business men generally want to further their own business interests. Tourists enjoy the fun. Members of the diplomatic service are intelligent and conscientious and generally perform their duties faithfully. But too often they lack the patriotic zeal and the revolutionary fervour shown by the fighters for freedom during the struggle for independence — both of which virtues we need in an even greater degree during the present time of our national reconstruction. They are also not generally conversant with the spiritual and cultural heritage of India, by means of which they could impress thoughtful people in the West. Scholars coming to America on the programme of cultural exchange make whirlwind tours of the country in two or three months and visit a few universities and cultural organizations. How a real cultural exchange can take place through such short visits passes one's understanding. Most of the research students work in laboratories for only a year or so and they often feel frustrated when they return to India in the absence of highly developed research facilities such as are available in America and England. Furthermore, a student does not develop a real capacity for research through such a brief stay. Many students seek

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higher degrees from foreign universities to get better jobs after their return, and then feel disappointed because India's standard of salary is low. Some refuse to go back, and marry and settle down abroad to enjoy a comfortable life. Among those who go back to India, some return lured by higher salaries in the West. Many students carry on research work in America which has very little bearing on India's vital problems.

Now, no one will deny the value of visits of qualified students and scholars to the West, either for gaining further knowledge or for the dissemination of Indian culture. But the vital problem in India today is that of the masses — their hunger, ignorance, and ill-health. In any national programme this fact should receive prior consideration. The selection of students for studying abroad must be carefully made. No one should be encouraged to come to the West just for the sake of a degree, be it an M.A. or a Ph.D., which can easily be obtained in India. Modern Russia is not being built up by the Russian students who have studied abroad. Only mature students who have already done work in India and who are thoroughly acquainted with India's social, political, and economic condition should enjoy this privilege. Every student, before he leaves the country, should be told what special subjects he should study and what kind of work he should do after his return. If the students go abroad with some knowledge of Indian culture, they will obtain respect from their fellow workers and friends. It is sad to see how much of money and energy is being wasted today by thousands of students who come to foreign countries just for a degree or to carry on research for a short period. With a part of that money India could equip her colleges with scientific and medical instruments, and invite foreign professors, if necessary, to teach there. Foreign travel must be drastically curtailed. Only those who are engaged in the most vital problems of the country which need outside help and experience should be allowed to travel. Let all, in whatever field their duties be, high or low, dedicate themselves to the welfare of the country, forgoing personal power or profit, and in a short time the country will make phenomenal progress. We may learn many things from the outside world to regenerate India but our real inspiration must come from our own traditions and state of affairs. The saviour of a country in its critical hour has always sprung from its own soil.

India possesses intelligence and material resources to build up her national life. She does not have to go to the outside world with a begging bowl for grants and loans. Foreign help has behind it political and military considerations and is given in self-interest. If they are not fulfilled the donor shows resentment. The receiver also cultivates the habit of helpless dependence. It is often noticed that in those countries which receive foreign help abundantly, a considerable part of which is given for military purposes, the rich become richer and the poor poorer. If Indians utilize all their resources, physical and mental, work hard and unselfishly, India will not need much foreign help. If any outside help, technical or otherwise, is absolutely necessary, it will be given with joy. If Indians are strong, united, and ready to shed their last drop of blood for the country, they will not have to fear foreign penetration or open invasion. It is the poverty of the masses, frustration of educated youths, and corruption in high places that invite dictatorship and communism.

The Common Man in Russia

I have just returned* from a visit to Russia, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, and am writing this article at Triberg, a tiny town nestled in the Black Forest in Germany. The contrast between the material condition of the common man in India, and in Europe and Russia, fills an Indian's heart with shame and sadness. I was much impressed with what I saw during my short visit to Russia, which has been making a great experiment since 1917 to raise the condition of the masses,

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who for centuries suffered from the exploitation of priests and a powerful nobility. Before giving my impressions I will briefly describe the country and the people.

Russia today is nearly three times as large as the United States of America, forty times as large as France, and ninety times as large as Great Britain. No other country knows such vast spaces. The distance by rail between Leningrad on the Baltic and Vladivostok on the Pacific is 5,793 miles. Russia contains deserts as hot as the world's warmest places and cold forests where in winter the thermometer registers as low as 90 or even 100 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. From the moon, Russia perhaps resembles a layer cake, with arctic icing at the top, green strips at the centre, and a hard-burned desert crust below. A major part of Russia is monotonously flat. The Urals are the only mountains in the heart of the country, and they are little more than large hills, whose rounded tops are hardly noticed by travellers on the Trans-Siberian Railroad. Of the nine rivers in the world that are more than 2,800 miles long, Russia has four. It was along the rivers that Russia grew. It is said that no people can sleep longer than the Russians and no people can work — or fight harder than the Russians. The early history of Russia can be scantily reconstructed from old Byzantine records, occasional Persian and Arabic sources, and the doubtful chronicle of Nestor, a learned monk of Kiev, who lived about 1100 A.D. Russia's political history began to develop from the middle of the ninth century, when the Scandinavian Rurik entered Russia and founded a dynasty. During the early feudal period in Europe and again after the fall of Constantinople (1453), European culture flourished in Russia. Cities like Kiev and Novogorod had palaces and cathedrals of great beauty and craftsmanship. Russian cultural achievements have been preserved in the great museums of the country. Peter the Great (1682-1725), who brought science and technology from Europe, was the builder of modern Russia. From the time of Catherine II (1762-1796) the cultural life of the country was powerfully influenced by Europe. Under Vladimir the Saint (978-1015), Russia accepted Christianity from the Greek Orthodox Church. In the nineteenth century great literary men flourished and art and music found patrons in the Russian court.

Prior to the revolution of 1917, the common man lived in squalor, poverty, and ignorance. From very early times the country was invaded by the Tartars, the Huns, the Teutonic Knights, the Poles, and the Swedes. Big cities were destroyed and quickly rebuilt. In recent years the two great world wars worked havoc. Ancient cities like Kiev and Minsk, once prosperous and beautiful, were reduced to rubble. The Nazi army marched to the outskirts of Leningrad and encamped there for nine hundred days, destroying everything in its wake. There is hardly a family in Russia which has not lost a male member in the war. Yet now there is no trace of this destruction. Apartment houses with modern facilities are being built. There are beautiful parks, recreation places for the young and the old, gymnasiums, and theatres dedicated to the welfare of the people. No bill-boards or other advertisements spoil the beauty of the cities or the countryside. As everything is controlled by the State there is no room for individual competition. The Hermitage, the great museum in Leningrad, and the Kremlin in Moscow, containing priceless art treasures, are daily visited by thousands of people. Even in distant Siberia new cities are being built with modern comforts. There is in Moscow an exhibition ground which contains individual buildings representing Russia's fifteen republics, in which thousands of visitors see the sputniks, rockets, and other products of science and technology. Naturally they feel happy and proud about the U.S.S.R.'s great achievements. The city streets are absolutely clean. In the morning one sees elderly women sweeping them with big brooms. The subways in Moscow and Leningrad are very beautiful. One does not see the like of them anywhere in Europe or America. The floors,

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walls, pillars, and ceilings of the stations are made of marble and other stones of various colours, dug from Russian quarries. They are adorned with statues and bas-reliefs of national heroes, wars, workshops, and other subjects which stimulate people's patriotic fervour. On the roads one sees many more trucks than automobiles, which presumably are considered items of luxury. This shows the quick pace of industrialization of the country. At the same time, there are no strikes or unemployment.

Education and medical care are free for all and from these the poorer people obtain the maximum benefit. The Moscow University has thirty thousand students. In addition to receiving free education, post-graduate students obtain stipends for the support of their families. I have been told that after discharge from the hospital, a patient, if necessary, is sent to a convalescent home at the expense of the State. At Minsk I fell ill and went to a hospital, where I received free treatment. For three days doctors visited me in my hotel morning and evening. On the day of my departure the doctor examined me at six o'clock in the morning. I did not succeed in persuading the physicians to take a fee, as all are paid by the State.

Attached to the factories there are cultural centres where workers enjoy music, dancing, swimming, moving pictures, and other forms of recreation. They are given free vacations in healthful places. Theatres and opera houses, which fifty years ago were visited only by aristocrats and military officers, are now frequented by the common man. No bargaining is allowed in the stores or shops, as the prices are fixed by the Government. True, the department stores contain very few luxury articles compared to the American standard but people do not appear to complain. It should be remembered that before 1917 Russia was far behind America and Western Europe in science and technology. She is now in the process of catching up. Tipping is not allowed. I could not persuade my two polite and intelligent guides in Moscow and Leningrad to take a little gift from me. Finally they agreed to accept some of my books on Hinduism.

All these achievements since 1917 are the result of careful planning. While subways, sputniks, rockets, and nuclear weapons were built at terrific expense, the basic needs of the common man were not overlooked. Business and industry are controlled by the State. Therefore, there is no scope for undue profit taking. This may explain how the Government can divert a huge fund to improve the condition of the people. Behind the Soviet success lies ungrudging sacrifice, hard work, and iron discipline on the part of men and women. The energy of two hundred and twenty millions of people has been harnessed for the welfare of the common man. They all look healthy and happy because they have a song to sing while they work. They are determined to make Russia a model progressive country.

There are in Russia two million of official Communists whose thinking is controlled by the philosophy of Marx and Lenin. Education is guided by the same policy, the goal being to create a classless society with healthy bodies and sound minds. People are taught to obey rather than to think. Though the State is neutral about religion, Communists are all materialists. But the people can attend church services without any let or hindrance. I attended some of the services in Moscow. The church was full. The worship consists mostly of congregational singing. *The New York Times* of September 14, 1962, published a report of the religious life in Russia by a group of American ministers. They were impressed by the 'vitality of the church' under a government whose purpose is to eliminate the church. They were 'surprised to find groups of young children, young men and women and men of all ages' among church-goers in twelve Soviet cities visited. There is a beautiful mosque in Moscow built by Moslems for the purpose of worship. Scientists and intellectuals deny any supernatural power controlling the universe. I suppose the case is the same with

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those classes of people everywhere in the world.

Foreign tourists in Russia are treated with politeness, courtesy, and kindness. Many Russians I saw in the hotels are far from being inquisitive and curious about foreigners. I talked freely with our guides, one of whom was a school teacher and the other a research scholar in chemistry. They seemed to be well-informed about what was going on in the outside world. We frankly discussed religion, philosophy, and Russian life in general.

After my return I was asked if I had seen only those places which the Russian Government wants tourists to see, and if there are no slums or poor people in the countryside. I am sure there is poverty in Russia, as everywhere in the world, though I did not see any beggars, real or disguised, in Moscow, Leningrad, or Minsk. I was told that I could go anywhere and see any place barring military installations. One needs special permits to see certain factories. Foreigners are not permitted to photograph bridges. Intourist, the only Russian travel agency, recommends to the foreign tourists certain cities where comfortable hotels and English-speaking guides are available. I believe human nature is practically the same all over the world regarding certain basic feelings and emotions, such as love, hate, and indifference. People's thoughts and actions vary according to such factors as geography, nature, and tradition.

Russia is certainly different from the West and therefore somewhat inscrutable to Westerners. There is a very important reason why Russia is different from France, England, Germany, and the other Western countries. Europe was at one time dominated by Rome and came under Roman social and legal influence. Russia was never a Roman province, and that accounts for much. A Russian perhaps does not respect the letter of the law in the same way as a European or an American does. He feels that as laws are made by men, so also they can be broken by men. But he is very loyal to his traditions. Russia has grown up separately on the edge of and within the vast continent of Asia. Often characters in Russian novels behave with wilful inconsistency and a most un-Roman logic. Russian art appears to foreigners involved, and Russian national ideals, as reflected in the national policies, too often distant. In two thousand years of Russian history there runs a mystic awareness of man's for ever lonely soul and of his helplessness in the face of the unknowable. In a land of stern natural forces and cruel winds and frosts, people's minds are more sombre and less playful than the minds of those in sunnier and softer climates. Russians are seldom superficial. Even their love songs contain melancholy harmonies. Russia's problems have not been trivial. Time and again Russia was invaded from the West. Kiev, the capital of Russia, fell under the Tartars at the battle of Kalka in 1223. Central Russia was under the control of the Golden Horde for over three hundred years.

Though the Russian people have for ever been struggling against the forces of frost and storm and the unknown and unpredictable menaces that lurk beyond their limitless horizons, they are irresistible in the mass; but individually they are doomed to helplessness and unceasing labour.

The clue to the Russian character can be found in the myths associated with creation, the earth, and the Russian man.*

Sviatagor, the Creator, is whimsical. A huge creature, in the beginning he was fast asleep. One sees a lack of plan in what he does and from his actions learns the uselessness of haste. He wakes up and stretches his body lazily. Wherever his limbs rest a valley is created. He summons his tall horse, leaps into the saddle, and begins to ride. Once he is awake, not unlike the Russians themselves, he moves and his progress is wild and irresistible. Mountains are formed by the earth torn up by his horse's hooves; and where his horse stops, there appears a lake. After

* The materials for these stories have been gathered from *Russia Then and Always* by Nina Verhovskoy Hyde and Fillmore Hyde, published by Coward-McCann, Inc., New York.

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covering a great distance, he stops and decides that, after all, it is too early for him to be up and about. Being in no hurry, he lies down and goes to sleep again. In this story one can see the man of the long Russian winter, wondering impatiently when spring will come and the land be firm enough for ploughing, even though he knows that impatience is futile. One can see in it, too, the longing of the Russian people for unity, success, and freedom. According to the legend, Sviatagor is still sleeping. But it is said that if ever Russia, the land of 'down yonder into the far away,' is in danger, he will awake and ride again.

The second of the three great forces is Mikula Selianinovich. Mikula is the earth, and it is Mikula who makes the land ready so that man may inhabit it and carry on the struggle for life and sustenance. Before Sviatagor went to sleep he gave a loud cry, which was heard all over the creation. Mikula heard this cry and rose out of the soil, with a huge plough in his arms. He moved on deliberately, for though creation may be speedy, the growing of seeds, the currents of the great slow rivers of Russia, and the changing of the seasons cannot be hurried. These things are in the province of Mikula. Methodically and patiently he travelled over the land, throwing grain on either side with a vast, broad sweep of his tremendous arm, and pushing his plough in front of him. At length, having covered a vast distance, he decided that he had done enough and that it was for man to carry on the work. So, like Sviatagor, Mikula, who is also Russian, went back to sleep. But he promised that he would wake up if anyone attempted to destroy his work. And if he was not strong enough to punish the intruder, he would waken Sviatagor, who is irresistible.

Next appears the Russian common man himself, Ilya Murometz, doomed to suffer the ills of life and carry on the work. Ilya's mother was active every minute around the house without any help from him, though he was healthy and strong and capable of great achievements. He was not lazy or indifferent, but like traditional Russians he just sits. In spite of his mother's pleadings to rouse him, he just sat *seven times seven times seven years.* At the end of this period his mother asked him the reason for his inactivity. He replied that he had decided that he had to think, and that the thinking would require another period of seven times seven times seven years. So his mother waited. When the second period was over, she asked him what he was thinking about. He was thinking, he said, about what he ought to think about. So a third period passed.... His mother asked him what he had thought to think about. He said that his thinking was over. He now knew that he had some action to perform; what action he did not know, and to find that out would again require seven times seven times seven years. Thus the incredible Russian myth goes on. Time is nothing. Work and patience are everything. So Ilya's mother kept quiet, knowing by now that Ilya's character was not to be changed. Finally Ilya stood up and said goodbye to his mother. With a vigour and energy as great as his apparent slothfulness had been before, he ranged through all the land of down yonder into the far away, ploughing fields, felling forests, repelling invading hordes, defending the weak, and wreaking vengeance on criminals and bandits — in a word, doing what a man should do. But with all this, Ilya, the Russian man, prefers a simple village feast and good companions, a day of idleness, to work. But if work be necessary, then let it be work indeed, cataclysmic and thoroughgoing. That is his philosophy.

Here is one more story from Russian mythology for a clue to another side of the Russian character. It is about Alyosha Popovitch of the Golden Hair. Handsome and ingratiating, he loves the ladies, with whom his success is enormous. He has a swaggering nature and his devil-may-care life is one of wilful disregard of man-made laws and rules, which he feels free to break. By sly and frankly underhand means he gets his way and gains his ends, which, of course, are good for Russia. Alyosha is of prime importance

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because throughout all Russian history the maddening and yet appealing qualities of this lawless hero are for ever cropping up in the Russian people, stubbornly thwarting all efforts toward reform and regulation. While other heroes represent the Russian's love for and willingness to die for the land of Sviatagor, the traits of Alyosha Popovitch symbolize the everlasting unruliness of spirit, the lust for wandering, and the vague, undirected rebellion that was the despair of those who fought to make of Russia an orderly and effective State.

Throughout her long history Russia has always felt conscious of the extreme remoteness of her land. She has seen the outside world most often in the unpleasing role of forces bent on conquest or destruction, and her views have not been coloured sweetly. The defense of the Russian land has been the theme on which her best-loved songs have been composed. To the Russian, knowing himself and his land, there seems nothing strange in the long sleeps of Mikula or Sviatagor or the endless dreaming of Ilya Murometz. There is no hurry in nature or in the Russian soil. Even Russian wars, — fought with the alien peoples of Asia and the envious and overcrowded people of Europe — have borne an aspect of inevitability and timelessness. In his folk tales the Russian reveals himself as a man who will sleep much and drink much vodka, sing and quarrel. But if the Russian must, he will fight, and fight with fearful fury, looking on his enemies as men of great efficiency, yet withal fools to dream of such a conquering as would make a slave of Ilya Murometz. Over and over again in her wars Russia has shown that by retreat she can survive and in time return and win. And also in his folk tales the Russian indicates his knowledge that it is not parades and speeches that build empires, but land and men, work and patience.

Perhaps I have given a one-sided picture of Russia after such a short visit. The purpose of this article is not to pass judgment on the Russian political or economic system, nor on the methods by which they operate. I differ with them in many respects. I do not regard as completely evil what is happening in Russia, nor do I accept the view held by many Russians that the West is wholly evil. Conditioned by Hindu religion and philosophy, I refuse to see a fundamental distinction between good and evil, as between black and white. There are many other shades in between them. I also do not believe in the absolute monopoly of truth by any single nation or culture, nor in the slogan "either — or". My purpose in this section of my article is to give Indians an example of the dedication of a people for the improvement of the common man under very trying circumstances.

Often in Russia I thought of the future of Communism. It is a growing process and bound to change with the progress of time. If it remains a fixed dogma it will perish. Already, however, the policies of Marx and Lenin have been modified to suit changing conditions. Stalin has been discredited and his body removed from the mausoleum in Moscow's Red Square. One does not see his statue or picture anywhere. One happy thing to notice is that Russia is increasing her contacts with the outside world. English is being studied more and more in the universities. Tourists are visiting Russia in increasing numbers. Arrangements have been made for an exchange between Russia and America of experts in science, agriculture, technology, art, music, and literature. All this is bound to alter the views of the Russians and Americans regarding one another.

A second thought that often came to my mind in Russia is whether, in spite of its many tangible achievements, a purely materialistic system like Communism can endure long. Does it not contain within it the seed of its own destruction? History shows, as with ancient Egypt and Babylonia, that a purely materialistic culture ultimately disintegrates. Ancient Greece, too, cherished the ideal of a sound mind in a sound body, *mens sana in corpore sano*, but could not maintain her greatness for more than a century, despite the fact that she produced outstanding leaders in

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the fields of art, philosophy, politics, and literature.

Thirdly, I thought, history shows that any nation which accumulates power tends to expand. It follows the policy of conquering other countries by force, infiltration, or subversion, and thus becomes a world menace. Finally it invites its own downfall. There are the examples of Germany under Hitler and of Italy under Mussolini. If Communism can control the temptation and urge to expansion and change its philosophy of materialism, it can very well play an important part in bringing about the welfare of the common man everywhere.

In the world's history the lot of the common man has heretofore been neglected. The brahmins attained their special status in Hindu society through religious disciplines and scriptural knowledge, and the barons and the feudal chiefs in European society, during the Middle Ages down to the French Revolution, through military power and heroism on the battlefield. In contemporary America, the leaders of society rose to their privileged position through the accumulation of wealth. But now the common man is becoming increasingly conscious of his inherent power. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were periods of imperial expansion, when the common man suffered most from foreign exploitation. The twentieth century is an era of liberation, in which the common man is playing a vital part. The modern national leaders — whether in India, China, Russia, or Africa — have had to lean on the support of the common man. With him lies the wave of the future.

The common man in the West

Though I experienced much kindness in Russia, I felt relaxed when I returned from Moscow to the European environment of Scandinavia and happy when I finally arrived in America, where I have been a resident since 1931. I breathed free air again. This shows, as every tourist knows, how much a person is conditioned by the surroundings and way of life to which he is accustomed. I may mention here that during my thirty-one years' stay in America I never felt that I was a foreigner. I have received unfailing courtesy and affection from all classes of people.

The Scandinavian countries, which I had visited before, have provided health, vitality, and physical well-being for the masses, though they did not pass through the violent upheaval of contemporary Russia. Unemployment, strikes, starvation, and lack of proper housing are rare. Everybody, from childhood to old age, seems to be well taken care of as far as basic needs are concerned. Medical care and education are accessible to all. One sees in the Danish villages, as in India, the huts of peasants thatched with straw; but with proper windows and flowers they look beautiful. In all these countries the streets are clean and people bear themselves with dignity.

The village of Triberg, in the Black Forest, impressed me very much. This part of Germany was occupied by the Romans about a hundred years after Christ. They built superb roads, some of which are still being used. The Black Forest is noted for its healthful climate. One sees everywhere cleanliness and general prosperity. Triberg contains all the modern amenities. A waterfall, the highest in Germany, descends in cascades and is an attraction for sightseers. There are fine walks in the pine covered hills commanding beautiful natural scenery. The people are courteous. Triberg is well known for the manufacture of cuckoo clocks and various musical instruments. It has a fine museum, a theatre, a gymnasium, and also schools and hospitals. How often I have thought that equally attractive villages could be built in many parts of the Himalayas and other healthy and scenic places of India, where people could enjoy their vacations and get fresh energy and strength.

The different countries of Europe have developed their national life in different ways. Everywhere there is a loyalty to the past, from which they draw their inspiration. In England, which still contains elements of the class system, individual freedom is never surrendered.

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England started the parliamentary system of Government. Issues are decided not by bullets but by ballots. America has especially developed the concept of equality of men and social justice for all. Everyone is entitled to enjoy life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. One American can very well say to another: 'You are no better than me; why should I cower before you? I am no better than you; why should you humble yourself before me?' This is the essence of democracy: a recognition of a man's inherent dignity — unaffected by his scholarship, wealth, or social position. In the West, views of opponents are respected. Voltaire once said to an opponent of his: 'I disagree completely with everything you have said, but I will lay down my life to defend your right to say it.' Dogmatism is not accepted in learned circles. Cromwell is reported to have said to a dogmatist: 'By the bowels of Christ, I beseech you to admit that you may be wrong at least once in your life.' Consciousness of duty binds Western society together. Many people know the famous order issued by Nelson on the eve of the battle of Trafalgar: 'England expects every man to do his duty.' Next morning was seen written on the boiler a sentence in bold letters: 'How does the son of a bitch know that we shan't?' This pungent statement was made by an ordinary marine. A true gentleman in the modern West combines the self-control and courtesy of the monk with the determination of the Medieval knight to avenge injustice anywhere. America cherishes the ideal of espousing the cause of the underdog. Speaking broadly, Europe has developed a refinement of intellect, taste, and human relationships of which it can be justly proud. 'The other man first' — seems to be the motto of the refined Westerner. Indians visiting Europe and America should observe these and other good traits of Westerners in order to avoid the influence of their bad traits. Once Swami Vivekananda remarked that he wanted to create in India a European society with Hindu religion. While not losing sight of our spiritual ideal, we must 'develop our industries and commerce, our wealth and materials, and strength and effectiveness.'

Swami Vivekananda, as I have said, wanted Indians to learn science and technology from the West to improve their material condition. His dream, which at the time could not be fulfilled on account of India's peculiar political situation, is being realized since the attainment of India's freedom. The Government is giving every encouragement to the development of science, technology, and industry. But there is a real danger. Science and technology, uninspired by belief in a higher reality and a spiritual concept of man and the universe, are not a panacea for all human ills. It is they that are mainly responsible, on account of certain types of mind working behind them, for today's world crisis. In the present state of human thinking any major discovery of science can very well give power to the strong to exploit the weak. Knowledge of science must be guided by higher wisdom, compassion, and human sympathy. Everyone should have access to knowledge, but he should also be taught how to make right use of that knowledge. A Hindu proverb says that to feed a cobra with milk without extracting its poison fangs is only to increase its venom. If India goes mad after naked material enjoyments which shatter both the mind and the soul, she will not again produce a Buddha or a Ramakrishna. She will disappoint those earnest Westerners who still expect 'light from the East'. What India needs now is careful planning of her national life, with dedicated leaders to execute it — a plan which will provide education, food, and health to the common man, satisfy his other basic needs, give him security throughout life, and afford leisure and opportunities to all to develop their spiritual potential. Such a plan need not exclude genuine research in the cultural areas of art, literature, philosophy, and the physical sciences. No other religion or philosophy is as intellectual as Hinduism, and at no other period of Indian history were the intellectuals more ignorant of or indifferent to their spiritual culture than in modern times. For the

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fruition of the plan what both the leaders and the workers need is feeling. Swami Vivekananda emphasized this feeling for the common man. Knowledge, perhaps, we have enough of; it does not initiate action. Feeling does. Let us not exhaust ourselves in loud talk, otherwise the national life will be paralysed. The engine, the whistle, and other parts of a steamship operate through steam. If all the steam is spent by the whistle, the ship does not move.

India's mission

From the very remote past India has developed a culture which has reconciled worldly prosperity with the Highest Good — abhyudaya with nihsreyasa. When India was spiritually great she was also materially prosperous. Throughout her history she has stressed charity, non-violence, self-control, and other spiritual virtues. She has often sacrificed material power in pursuit of higher ideals. She has valued inner wisdom and peace more than the knowledge and excitement of the outer world. Her saints and philosophers have shown how to sublimate material enjoyment (bhoga) into communion with the infinite (yoga). Wealth (artha) and sense-pleasure (kama), if based upon dharma (righteousness), ultimately confer on the spirit liberation from bondage to matter (moksha). Material enjoyment based on sheer competition ultimately brings boredom and has no spiritual value.

Today many people in Europe and America ask whether, with the growth of science and technology, resulting in increased physical comfort, India will not so much stress renunciation, Nirvana, and the futility of rebirth. But a Buddha or a Swami Vivekananda did not renounce the world and set forth in quest of the Eternal because he was poor or frustrated in life. At a certain stage of evolution every soul revolts against the finite view of life and seeks communion with the Infinite. 'That which is infinite is alone happiness.' The West, saturated with material enjoyment, will one day seek spiritual light, and may very well seek Indian wisdom for guidance. May India not fail it.

India's future mission was anticipated by Swami Vivekananda. He envisaged the greatness of the India to come as surpassing the glories of her past. The country that has produced, in an uninterrupted line, illumined souls from the Vedic seers to Ramakrishna cannot remain stagnant, far less disintegrate. However much we may learn from the outside world, the broad paths of our national progress have been chalked out by our saints and seers.

In this centenary year of Swami Vivekananda's birth, many institutions will be dedicated to perpetuating his memory. But their purpose will be fulfilled if Indians, both men and women, dedicate themselves to the all-round welfare of India's common man, the most pressing need of our time, and for its realization pledge their life, liberty, and sacred honour.

We must see how the engine of society works in other countries, and keep free and open communication with what is going on in the minds of other nations, if we really want to be a nation again. And over and above all, we must cease to tyrannize.

* * *

The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow.... Now, freedom is the only condition of growth; take that off, the result is degeneration. ...Be pure and holy, and love for love's sake. Love the poor, the miserable, the downtrodden, and the Lord will bless you.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—A SPOKESMAN OF THE DIVINE LOGOS

SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

[This article forms in effect, the text of an address given by Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, President of India, on March 31, 1963, on the occasion of Swami Vivekananda Birth Centenary at Sri Avinashilingam Home Science College, Coimbatore. — *Ed.*]

In any living culture, you will always find a perpetual process of renewal. What happens to be heresy today becomes heritage tomorrow. What is adventure for us today, becomes legacy tomorrow. In other words, if a culture is to perpetuate itself, it is reaffirming its fundamentals and trying to readjust them to the requirements of each generation. If we lose this quality of self-renewal, the culture itself becomes decadent. It has been our good fortune that so far as the Indian culture is concerned, it has had this living vitality, this capacity to renew itself, to shed away the old and reincarnate itself in the new. In chapter 4 of the Bhagavad Gītā, the Teacher says : 'I taught this yoga to Vivaswān, Vivaswān taught it to Manu. Manu taught it to Ikṣvāku. Today I am teaching it to you, Arjuna.' In other words it is the same old Purātana Dharma also called Sanātana Dharma, the ancient doctrine. It is the eternal doctrine, that is being expressed in different ages by different individuals. The Buddha when he came said, 'I am the restorer of the ancient path. I am not giving you anything new'. Jesus proclaimed that he came to fulfil, not to destroy. In other words, all the great teachers of the world take up the fundamental truth, discard the excrescences, the accretions which had crept into them and recapture the original purity, and present it to their generation. The great teachers are the vehicles of the living Word. They are the voice of the inspired Logos. They are the people who give utterance to the Eternal, dwelling in each individual. They have the capacity to give articulate expression to them. Swami Vivekananda was a spokesman of this divine Logos and he took hold of the requirements of this age in which he was born and presented it so as to make a fervent appeal to the hungry heart and the searching mind of his generation.

He was born in an age when science was predominant. He was a student in a Calcutta college where he read the great works of Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Bentham, Thomas Henry Huxley etc. He was steeped in the spirit of science. He was restless in spirit. His mind tossed about hither and thither. He did not know what to do, became an agnostic, joined the Brahmo Samaj, gave it up and was in a pathetic condition of mind. He needed something to live by and he was not able to get that thing. He wanted to know whether there was anyone in this world who could catch the spirit, who could convince him that he saw God, even as we see the walls before us or the audience here. He wanted someone who cared for facts. Science is a study of facts. It is a study of actual experience and if one is to be satisfied by the spirit of science, he must feel that there is a Divine Reality which is a fact which has been sensed, tested and experienced by people. Chance as some people would call it, providence as others would say, led him to the door of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. He went to him in dire distress and asked him, 'Have you seen God? Can you prove God to me?' The answer came : 'Yes. I have seen God. I have seen Him much more intensely than I see you here.' That was the man who was able to transmit to him, to communicate to him and to tell him, that he saw the Divine Reality

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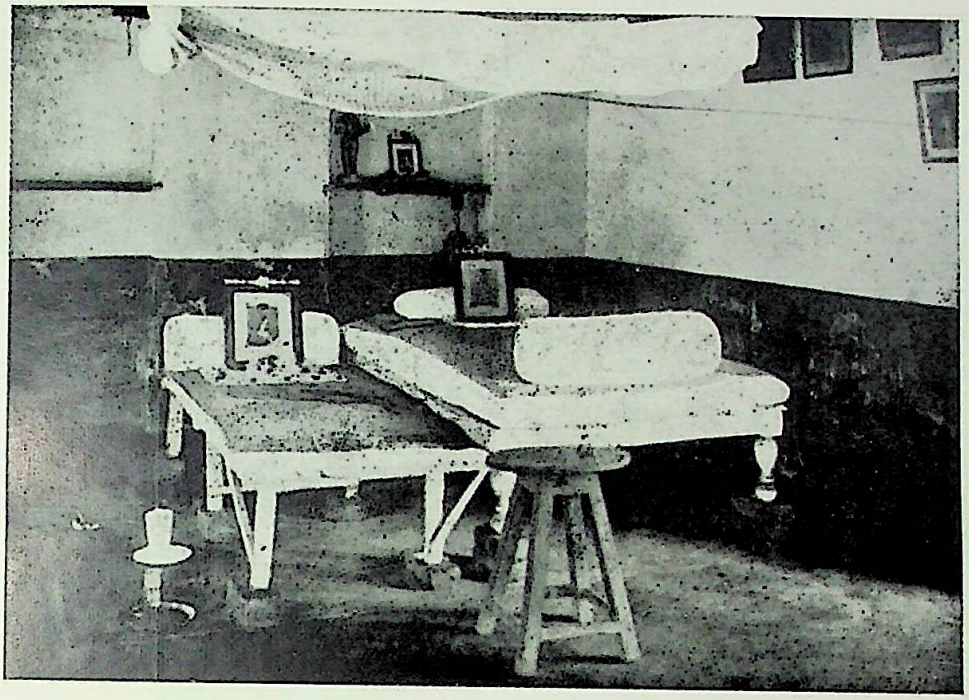
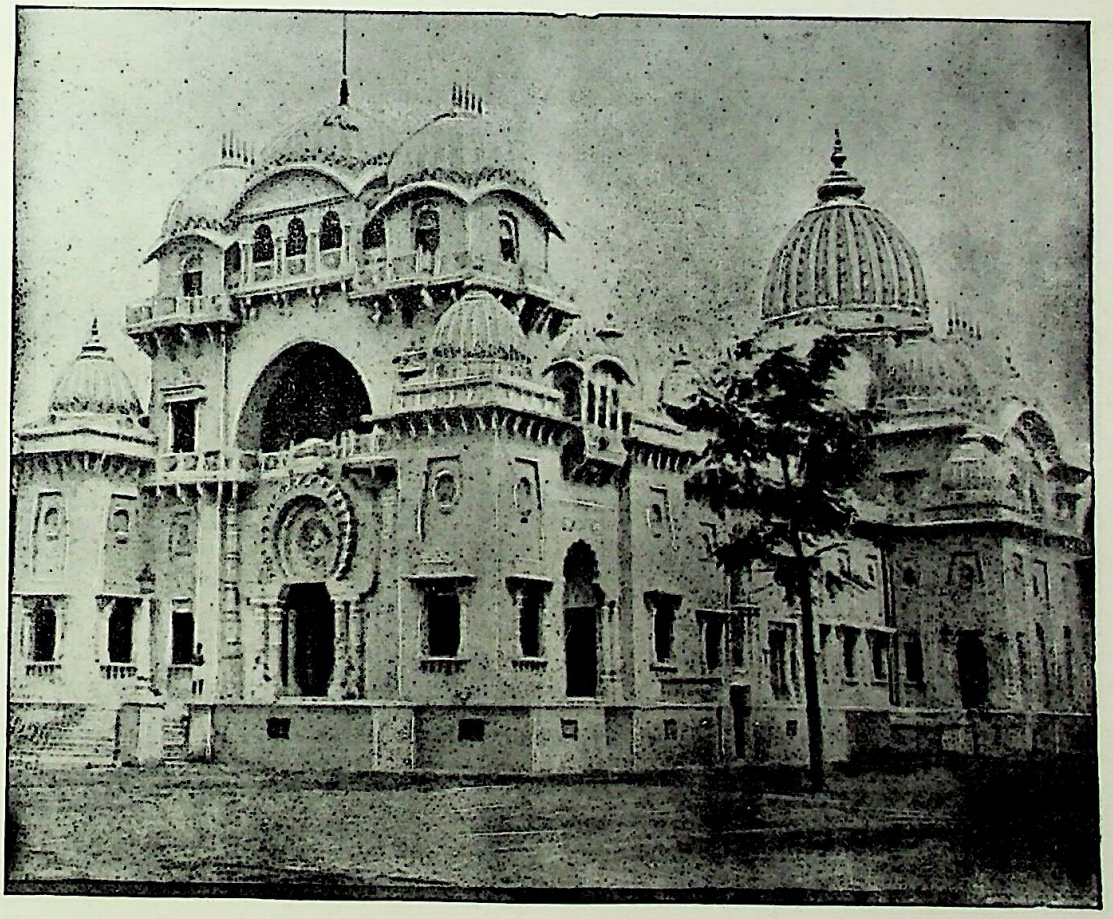


Sri Ramakrishna's Room at Dakshineswar.



Sri Ramakrishna's Temple at Belur Math.

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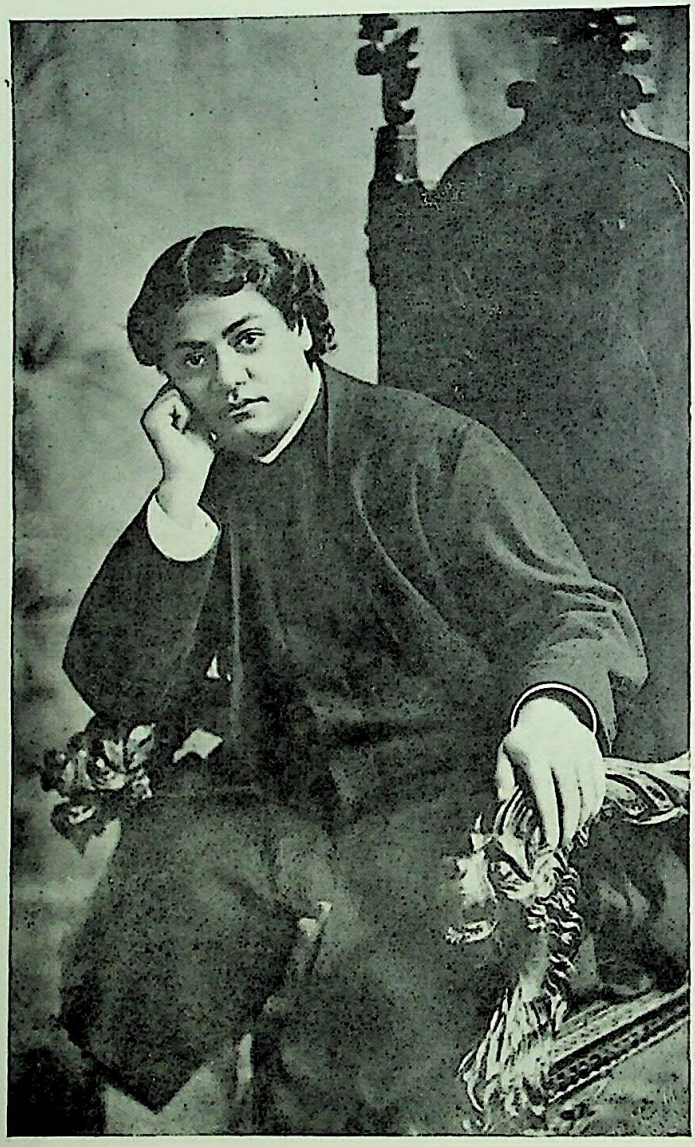

(CALIFORNIA 1900)

'After all, Joe, I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the Banyan at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature; works and activities, doing good and so forth are all superimpositions.'

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even as we see tables and chairs. Then the conversion happened. It was a moment of his rebirth, so to say. He became convinced of the reality of God. He said religion is not a matter of doctrinal conformity or ritualistic piety. They may be essential for people to reach a particular goal, but its fundamental reality is the sight of God. Faith must be replaced by sight. Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. It is that seeing of God that makes a man truly religious. An authentically religious man is one who does not report from hearsay, who does not quote scriptures or authorities but says, 'I have felt in the pulse of my being the reality of the divine. If there is one fact in this world, it is the supreme fact of God. As you have seen other facts I have noted this particular fact. This is something which is vital to me, in which I live.'

Here it was that Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa were echoing the great tradition of this country, the country which laid stress on the sight of God. सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः। The sages see constantly. ब्रह्मसंस्पर्श as the Gita puts it : वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं 'I know this eminent Puruṣa', as the Upanishads say it. It is not a question of talking about God, acquiring a doctrine about God or accepting dogmas about God. It is a question of seeing God face to face, as other individuals see other sights. That is what distinguishes the authentically religious souls from the spurious souls who pretend to be religious as most of us do. We go about talking religion but denying God in every act which we do, paying our courtship to the world, the flesh and the devil. We accept God in theory, but deny him in practice. But a man who has realized God becomes incapable of doing anything which is undivine or irreligious. It is not possible. He has psychologically died to any kind of egoism or sin. That experience has made him a new being altogether, seeing with different eyes, feeling with different hearts, and his heart beating in sympathy with every kind of suffering, which we come across in this world.

So his spirit of science was satisfied, because here was a man who told him that God is a fact, is a reality, is something which we can experience. Facts are given to us. Theories are framed by us. Theories may change, but facts don't change. Here is the ultimate fact, the one supreme fact of the reality of God. It was accepted by Sri Ramakrishna and accepted by Vivekananda. How can we get it? It is not something which we can buy in a store or read in a book. It is something which we have to realize by a complete refashioning of our nature, remaking of ourselves. It is a difficult process. It is not something which we can come across by any cheap and easy method. He passed through spiritual exercises, practised meditation till at last he was able also to say, "I have felt the reality of God. I have seen God." That was the kind of experience which Swami Vivekananda was able to accept. The touch of Sri Ramakrishna made him into a different being, gave to him the vision, the divine eye, *divyacakṣus* दिव्यचक्षुस् by which we are able to apprehend the Truth or the Ultimate Reality or the Supreme. Science, therefore, in him was satisfied. Religion, he knew, talked in a hundred different ways. What is it that we can say of this sensed reality, of that experienced reality, of that which we feel in our hearts? What is it we can say if we see a beautiful sunset? We say, it is beautiful. But to describe it in words will test you a lot. You can never bring out the beauty of a sunset by a series of words. It is something one has to see, if one is to appreciate its beauty; so also, the immensity of God, the mysteriousness of God is something which we can only see by ourselves. Other people may lead us but each one has to exercise the vision for himself. He has to see the reality for himself. There can be no such thing as vicarious seeing of God through other people's eyes. Each one has to see it himself. Such a reality can't be described in words. You have a Tamil song which I once upon a time heard :

யாருக்குத்தான் தெரியும் அவர் பெருமை
அம்பல நாடகமாடிய மகிமை

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Who knows the glory of the divine, the greatness of the divine, that reality which is so immense, so great, so transcendent to the world of space and time! Though it inspires, you can never comprehend it. No man can describe to you the richness of that kind of religious experience. All people have asserted it, not merely our people; they have all asserted that the Supreme Reality cannot be expressed in words, cannot be expressed in logical propositions, but forms are necessary. It is *acintya*, it is *aprameya*, it is *aśareera*, it is *nirvikāra*.

साधकानां सिध्यर्थं ब्रह्मणो रूपकल्पना।

If forms are given to it, it is because forms have to be given to the Supreme for the sake of satisfying the desires, the ambitions of the ordinary people who cannot rise to that immense height of apprehending the Divine face to face. For such people you have to give them pathways, steps, rungs in the ladder. They have to go one by one until they are able to attain that beatitude, that complete merging in the ocean of wisdom and joy. अपारसंवित् सुखसागर।. It is *samvit* संवित् wisdom, सुख joy, सागर ocean, अपार boundless. So, it is that which we have to get at. We cannot get at it by easy methods. But yet people have accepted several forms, have adopted several designs. All these forms are fabricated or made for the purpose of helping. स च भगवान् ज्ञानैश्वर्य बलवीर्य तेजोभिः सदा सम्पन्नः त्रिगुणात्मिकां स्वां मायां मूलप्रकृतिं वशीकृत्य अजः अव्ययो भूतानां हि ईश्वरोऽपि सन् स्वमायया देहवान् इव जात इव भक्तानुग्रहम् लोकानुग्रहम् कुर्वन् लक्ष्यते। It is for the sake of the devotees that we have them. When we know that these are pathways to reality, these are forms which we accept for apprehending the supreme reality, all quarrels about, which way you adopt, which approach, which address you make, these things become utterly irrelevant. So it is, he was able to say in that Chicago Parliament of Religions — 'I don't want a Christian to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, or a Hindu or Buddhist to become a Christian. I want each of them to learn from one another and grow according to his own genius and try to understand the fullest implications of his own particular religious idea.' If you are able to do it, the path may turn and twist, but when you reach a hill top, you see, you observe the exact spiritual landscape which is the same whatever pathway you adopted, whatever method of approach you accepted. So he said, 'Friends, we are one in God, in God the Supreme, who is called differently by different people. I don't want you to give up your religion, but I want you to understand other religions. Learn from them, learn from them the tranquil spirit, learn from them patience under suffering, learn the need for calm meditation, learn from others whatever is valuable, whatever is of good report which they are able to give to you.' So religion for him became a kind of an order, a kind of a norm, a kind of a harmony in which all religions have their place, provided you look upon them as partners in a quest, not rivals. The one beyond belongs to us all and it is not something which escapes us, provided our intention is earnest and our endeavour is full and vigorous; we are bound to reach it. Religion is an apprehension of reality. This apprehension is incapable of being expressed by words and propositions. Therefore, don't quarrel about the halting definitions, about imperfect formulations, about the fabrications which we impose. रूपकल्पना। कल्पना *kalpana* was the word used. The forms are imagined by us so as to give expression to it.

The Swami was steeped in the spirit of science, in the spirit of religion and he was thoroughly humanistic in his outlook. What is God? God is there, dwelling in the innermost depths of your being. He is not someone who is residing in the sky above. He is present everywhere. If He is not present everywhere, He is present nowhere and it is that kind of God — Whom you see as omnipresent, as someone Who is there present to everyone, as someone Whom, man feels as a constant companion looking on him, helping him and guiding him in everything he is

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doing — that Swami Vivekananda believed in and realized. He looked at our country; when he looked at the popular Hinduism of the country, he denounced it, he castigated it. With a spiritual daring, he said: 'My God is the God of the wicked, is the God of the poor, is the God of the neglected masses. I have nothing to do with that God who does not dwell in the ordinary human being.' So he pointed out that the worship of man is the worship of God. The service of man, trying to help him to the best of your ability, is the best kind of service you can render to the divine. Understand that those people who talk about God and neglect the poor, and the down-trodden and don't care about the disinherited and the hurt, are not truly religious, do not truly believe in God. So his religion expressed itself in a spirit of fundamental humanism. As has been said already, that he is not an atheist who does not believe in God, but he is an atheist who does not believe in man. Where is God? God is in man. He is Paramatman. He is not merely Bhagavan, Brahman, he is the supreme soul in you. When you abstract from your outer layers of consciousness, mind and animality, if you withdraw into the centre of your own being, if you build up a shrine of solitude there, you will see there the divine presence. The divine light is there ever shining, ever ready to come to your assistance and help you if only you do this process of abstracting from the outward and getting into the most inward aspect of your nature. Each man is made in the likeness of God. Each one of us is divine यत्र जीव: तत्र शिव: Where there is Jiva there is Śiva. Śiva is not somewhere up. He is there where a human being is.

So we are suffering the retribution on account of our neglecting the masses. What we are doing today is not a matter of charity, it is not a matter of justice. It is a matter of atonement for our past neglect, atonement for our past sin. We have neglected our duty to our fellow human being, to the down-trodden, to our women and to our own people whom we regard as belonging to this caste or that caste. We have done that and we have suffered as the result of it centuries of servitude. If we today do not cast away that kind of prejudice and don't free ourselves from every element of pride, don't become ultimately human, it is impossible for us to call ourselves believers in God. A true servant of God is a servant of the ordinary neglected masses of this country. The religion which Swami Vivekananda taught is a composite of science, religion and humanism. He had immense courage, spiritual daring of an exalted character to look upon that part of the country as a lunatic asylum, where people looked upon other people not only as untouchables but unapproachables. He was able to say, can man indulge in such practices and still believe that he is a believer in God? It is a kind of a sin which deserves that kind of castigation. Even today in spite of all the lessons that have been taught to us by the early sages of the Upaniṣads, by Buddha, Mahavira, Śankaracharya, Nanak, Kabir, Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, we are still the victims of these prejudices, prejudices which make us believe that we are at the top of the world and other people are much below us. We have an arrogance, an unconscious pride, an effortless sense of superiority which we adopt when we deal with other beings which makes us somewhat hateful to those other beings themselves. We must be humble. The first sign of any kind of faith in God is humility. Humility, courage, renunciation, service — these are all the ideals which Swami Vivekananda put before us. Let us, when we are celebrating his centenary, remember the lessons that he taught to us, not merely uttering them, but assimilating them into our very being.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

[Swami Pavitrananda is Head of the Vedanta Society, New York. He was President of Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, India, before taking up his work in America. Here in a small compass, he beautifully portrays Swamiji's instructions regarding spiritual life and practice. — *Ed.*]

'Ye divinities on earth, it is a sin to call a man a sinner' — thus spake Swami Vivekananda, in his lecture at the Chicago Parliament of Religions, which was, in a sense, his first public utterance before the world. This also contained the essence of his teachings. This statement contained two ideas — one positive, the other negative. The positive idea is that man is essentially divine. No proof is necessary for that. Truth is its own proof; it does not require a prop to stand upon. If a person cannot see or perceive the truth, it is his own fault. If one cannot perceive the truth, that fact does not detract in any way from the value of the truth itself. So the great Swami said, in his usually strong, definite, unequivocal way, that man is divine. Many will find it difficult to believe; many will be scared by it; and others, brought up in an atmosphere of sin-complex, will call it blasphemous.

But on what basis did Swami Vivekananda make this bold and tremendous statement? It was his direct experience. There is no proof greater than direct experience. Swami Vivekananda personally realized the state of his own divinity, and just like a lion out of its cage, he roared before one and all that every one was divine. By knowing the One, you know the all. The Swami got the knowledge of the One behind all, and knew the nature of all. His realization was so complete and vivid that he could not stand the idea that any one, however low and degraded from the standpoint of social opinion or popular verdict, should think himself, or be considered separate from the Divinity within him. Once he said, 'Do not seek God, but see God.' Where should one seek God? God is all-pervading, God is the Eternal Presence. Just open your eyes and see Him.

If that be true, which it undoubtedly is, it is a wrong idea to call anyone vile or wicked. What one sees, good or bad, in a person is only the outer covering of the Reality within him. That is the garment of the person. That garment changes, but not the man — the Reality. In that sense, to call a man vile or wicked is wrong, is a sin, for it is an untruth, a lie. Thereby you do harm to the person who is struggling with his own ignorance. You do harm not only to that particular individual, you do harm also to the society to which one belongs, you rivet one more chain on the whole world. If one millionth fraction of the whole population of the world would sit down for a while and say, 'Ye who suffer, ye who cry, ye all are divine, ye all are divine,' the face of the world would change in a moment — that was the conviction of Swami Vivekananda, uttered in one of his lectures. That was not only an utterance, not a fruitless conviction either. It was his burning realization which, with his anguished heart, he wanted to pass on to all others.

Is there not wickedness in the world? Do we not meet with plenty of vile and wicked people in life? Yes, there are wicked persons — those who commit horrible deeds. But emphasizing the idea that this person is wicked, that person is wrong, will not help matters. By the repetition of the word darkness, darkness will not go away. Rather, by such repetitions, the terrors of darkness will increase. The remedy against darkness is to bring light. Bring light, and darkness will go away. Darkness, however deep, from how-

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ever remote a time it may have existed, will instantaneously vanish if light is brought in. The Light of Knowledge is burning within each individual. That Light is veiled in ignorance, is covered up by layers of darkness. In a good person the layers are thin; in a so-called evil person, the layers are thick. That is the difference between persons considered good and bad in society. With the coming of knowledge, both sets of persons will be transformed in a trice. Darkness does not go step by step. When Light is brought, it goes away at once. Swami Vivekananda understood it, knew it, had realized it. Therefore he was desperately eager to remove the conception of sin and wickedness from the minds of men. If all could think in terms of what they really are, in no time they were sure to be transformed. So he emphasized the positive view. It was not an easy optimism of a type cultivated by people who are frightened by the thought of the existence of evil in life and who try to escape by ignoring it. This kind of optimism does not last long because it is only lip-deep. It is only words. Swami Vivekananda's optimism was the outcome of the direct experience of what man is, of the sure knowledge of what life and death are. From the transcendental height he spoke to the people below, to raise them to his own level. Therefore his words are so powerful, have timeless strength.

Swami Vivekananda was fully aware that such a high state cannot be got for the mere asking. It can be got for the mere asking, if one is intense enough in one's yearning for the realization of that state. People are not generally earnest enough in their spiritual pursuits; steady, persevering spiritual practice and discipline are necessary. That means struggle. Struggle is the price one has to pay for success in any endeavour. That is even more true in the field of religion. So he said that one has to pass through the hell of spiritual struggle in order to reach the heaven of peace. The soul has to wrestle and wrestle, and all of a sudden he gets the realization. Then he laughs at the idea that he had to struggle so much for the knowledge which was his own and within himself.

'Mind you,' Swami Vivekananda said, 'the great benefit in this life is struggle. It is through that we pass. If there is any road to Heaven, it is through Hell. Through Hell to Heaven is always the way. When the soul has wrestled with circumstances and has met death—a thousand times death on the way but nothing daunted has struggled forward again and again and yet again—then the soul comes out as a giant and laughs at the ideal he has been struggling for, because he finds how much greater is he than the ideal. I am the end, my own Self, and nothing else, for what is there to compare with my own Self?'[1]

Swami Vivekananda himself was an example of how earnest and intense one can be in search of the knowledge of the Self.

There are many methods of reaching the goal of spiritual life. Swami Vivekananda simplified them into four divisions. According to him: 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these—and be free.'

Technically these are called Bhakti Yoga, Jñāna Yoga, Karma Yoga, and Raja Yoga. Bhakti Yoga is for those who are dualists, or qualified monists. Jñāna Yoga is for the monists. Karma Yoga is not an altogether independent method; it is connected with Bhakti and Jñāna in the beginning and it is practised also after the realization of the goal. For Karma, or works, serve as a method of self-purification and illumined souls also do work for the good of humanity. Raja Yoga, as a method of training the mind for concentration, forms a part of all Yogas, though it itself is an independent philosophical system and method of spiritual practice. While dealing with these Yogas, though Swami Vivekananda did not essentially deviate from the orthodox schools, he, however, always added something of his own, threw new light on the

[1] *Complete Works*, Vol. V, p. 186.

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old systems, and interpreted the ancient ideas in modern living language. That is why his discourses on the Yogas, as also on other subjects, are so interesting, inspiring, and appealing to modern minds.

In his discourses on Jñāna Yoga, his interpretation of the complex philosophical word Māyā is highly interesting. He traces the history of the conception of Māyā from the Vedic age and then in modern language he says Māyā is a statement of fact. There are many incongruities in life which none can explain or escape. This is a fact, and Māyā is a statement of this fact, and so on. The highest experience of monism is a state which is not merely an idea, but a reality. Nevertheless, one cannot remain in that state ceaselessly. In that state one loses the body-consciousness completely; but one comes down from that state to the consciousness of body, though that is not exactly like the body-identification of ordinary individuals. To attain to the highest experience, nevertheless, an aspirant has to try to live that idea in his words, thoughts, and deeds. From that principle Swami Vivekananda builds up his idea of practical Vedanta. Man should always try to practise the idea that he is divine —'I am He' or 'Thou art That.' If one constantly remembers that idea, one will manifest great energy, strength, power and perfection. It will not be a case of inflating the ego, which is pseudo-monism. It will be a case of penetrating into one's depth of being, and feeling that all power is within, though not perceived by ordinary persons. Through practice one will find the two selves in oneself — the real self and the apparent self. Even if one does not experience that real self, it is there within one, just as shadows point to the substance. So always fall back upon your source of strength, and cease wailing in weakness and despair.

When talking of Bhakti, or Divine love, Swami Vivekananda would be in an ecstatic condition and the audience would be moved to tears, but he also said that religion was not weeping and wailing, religion was strength, that man was divine, and should always remember his divinity. This is a monistic idea. But Swami Vivekananda recommends this attitude to all — monists or dualists. The same idea he expresses in a dualistic way when he says that one should have faith in oneself first, and then in God. Is not faith in oneself the result of the power of God within one? Leaving aside philosophical subtleties, he would say that infinite power is within all; somehow that power must be called up and awakened. That is what Swami Vivekananda mainly wanted.

The Gītā speaks of Karma Yoga as doing work without attachment to the fruits thereof. Such work, according to the commentaries of Śankarāchārya, brings one purification of heart, which, in turn, leads to the realization of the Self. According to Swami Vivekananda purely unselfish work leads to the goal directly. If one is perfectly unselfish, one has become perfect, because with complete unselfishness, the ego which divides us from the all-pervading Reality is completely gone. And if God is all-pervading, we can serve God directly through our service to one and all.

'These are His manifold forms before thee,
Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?
Who loves all beings, without distinction,
He indeed is worshipping best his God.'

This is not a mere poetic fancy, or a stimulating advice for humanitarian work. This is the discovery of a new form of worship — direct and universal. Swami Vivekananda had no sympathy for so-called humanitarian work, for it denies the simple logical deduction from belief in God. If God exists, as He undoubtedly does, He can surely take care of His creation. He does not need the help of you or me for the protection and safety of His created beings. It is blasphemy to think that you can help anybody, or that anyone needs your help. It is a privilege for you to worship God in the poor, the sick, and the distressed through service to them. So serve all in all humility. Be grateful to those who

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offer you the opportunity to serve the Divine in them. By the same logic the oppressor is to be pitied more than the oppressed, however pitiful may be the lot of the oppressed. For the oppressor does not know that thereby he is oppressing himself. That is his irony of fate. The oppressor and the oppressed, the praiser and the praised, the blamer and the blamed are all one. This is altogether a new gospel of work preached by Swami Vivekananda.

Swami Vivekananda translated into English the aphorisms of Patanjali which he called Raja Yoga or the science of concentration. In his translation he followed the orthodox commentaries, but in many places the ideas were his own. This abstruse subject he made easy to understand and vital withal. Of all his Yoga writings, his book on Raja Yoga is most popular with many, at least in the West. He brings out the subject of Raja Yoga from mystical darkness to the bright light of day and deplores how this grand, rational and practical science has been made into an art of magic by mystery-mongers. His explanations of Prāṇa, Ākasha, Kundalini, Shat-chakra, the control of Psychic Prāṇa are original and marvellous. Here he spoke, one can easily see, from his direct realizations and not from intellect. It is a book of guidance and directions and not of explanation or psychology. And his side remarks are now and then highly inspiring and immensely helpful to one's daily life. For instance, why and how does concentration of the mind lead to the realization of the Self? Why is love all-powerful? How does hatred cause more harm to the person from whom it emanates than to whom it is done?

To quote his own words: '...just as in the case of electricity, the modern theory is that the power leaves the dynamo and completes the circle back to the dynamo, so with hate and love; they must come back to the source. Therefore do not hate anybody, because that hatred which comes out from you, must, in the long run, come back to you. If you love, that love will come back to you, completing the circuit. It is as certain as can be, that every bit of hatred that goes out of the heart of a man comes back to him in full force, nothing can stop it; similarly every impulse of love comes back to him.'[2] Many such practical directions can be found.

It is said that a place of pilgrimage reawakens when a man of God visits the place. This is how the sacred places remain the source of spiritual inspiration for ages. The scriptures also become living and revitalized when a man of God throws the light of his experiences on them. Swami Vivekananda brought new life to our old and ancient scriptures.

What happens when one reaches the goal of spiritual life? One's ego is gone, and one experiences and lives on his higher or the real Self. The little prison-house vanishes and one realizes one's universal Self or Eternal Existence, where there is no death, no misery, no conflict or interaction of good and evil. Man is ordinarily bound by time, space and causation. For the man of spiritual realization these bondages are gone and he experiences what is called absolute Freedom, or Liberation from the bondage of matter. That is a state of infinite bliss which words cannot express, thoughts cannot reach. One feels that bliss but one cannot describe it. It is what Swami Vivekananda in his poem on Samadhi says, 'His heart only knows who has felt it — a state beyond the reach of words and thoughts.'

Swami Vivekananda now and then gave out, though casually, glimpses of that state as experienced by himself. In a letter from Alameda, California, dated 18th April 1900, he says:

> 'Oh, it is so calm! My thoughts seem to come from a great, great distance in the interior of my own heart. They seem like faint, distant whispers, and peace is upon everything, sweet, sweet peace....
>
> The world *is*, but not beautiful nor ugly, but as sensations without exciting any emotion. Oh, Joe, the blessedness of it!

[2] *Complete Works*, Vol. I, p. 196.

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Everything is good and beautiful; for things are all losing their relative proportions for me — my body among the first. Om That Existence.'

A few days earlier from the same place he wrote:

'Mother is doing Her own work; I do not worry much now. Moths like me die by the thousands every instant. Her work goes on all the same. Glory unto Mother! . . . Alone and drifting about in the will-current of the Mother, has been my whole life.... I am free. I am Mother's child. She works. She plays. Why should I plan? What should I plan? Things came and went, just as She liked, without my planning. We are Her automatons. She is the wire-puller.'

Could these be only the personal experiences of an individual soul, without having any repercussions in the outside world? In that case it could be only a form of selfishness, albeit of a higher type. But this is not a case of personal selfish joy. A man with such experiences becomes a blessing to all mankind. The thoughts of such a great soul are more dynamic than the intense activity of a man who has no such high ideal. If one thinks a good thought even in the silence of a cave, that will, in time, sprout forth into activity. For his silent thoughts will influence people.

However, spiritual thoughts have their practical effects, too, on the world and mankind. Spiritual thoughts teach the doctrine of sameness in all things, and in all beings, because the same God is in all. 'Since seeing the Lord equally existent everywhere, he injures not Self by self, and so goes to the highest goal.'

If large numbers of persons realize this ideal, all conflicts in the world will die of themselves and there will be peace on earth. The world develops a sense of inequality in human minds, but real religion teaches equality of all. As a man of God represents the highest ideal of equality in his life, he becomes a power of good to mankind. Hence the utility of true religion.

True religion is universal. It cannot be denominational. True religion is seeing the Divinity in all. God is one. As such the God of the Hindus is the God of the Christians, and the God of the Christians cannot be different from the God of the Mohammedans. The Light is one, though the lamps are many. The differences are man-made artificialities and illogical. Once Swami Vivekananda wrote in great anguish,

'My Master used to say that these names ... Hindu, Christian, etc., stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and man. We must try to break them down first. They have lost all their good powers and now only stand as baneful influences under whose black magic even the best of us behave like demons.'[3]

In this respect Swami Vivekananda's conviction was so deep, and his realizations so vivid that even bigoted people would find it difficult to resist him, and with the passing of time his words are having more and more effect. Nowadays any one talking fanatically against any particular religion is considered as betraying a lack of true culture.

The deductions drawn by Swami Vivekananda from the idea of divinity in man are highly valuable even to persons who are not particularly interested in religious pursuits. If man is divine, it automatically follows that faith, strength, courage, and infinite power are the constituents of man's life. These are there in one's life even if one does not practise any orthodox religion. The old religion says that a man who does not believe in God is an atheist. Swami Vivekananda said that the man who does not believe in himself is an atheist. Does not an honest atheist wield greater power for good than those whose religion begins and ends in only lip-worship? Thus Swami Vivekananda awakened religious feelings even in the hearts of those who are barred by orthodoxy from the portals of of religion. Since the time Swami Vivekananda spoke, many so-called atheists, follow-

[3] *Complete Works*, Vol. VI, p. 266.

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ing his message, have become deeply and genuinely religious. Because an honest atheist has the courage of conviction, he follows the light of his conscience and afterwards finds that conscience is the voice of God and develops love for God. Many religious persons talk of God and religion but do not follow in practice what they say. They talk of God but do not show in action that they have any faith in God. They are morally cowards, seek worldly security and are unable to take any risk even for a good and noble cause. Swami Vivekananda had no sympathy for these kinds of people. He wanted young men — bold, strong, virile, who would be ready to face death if need be. For they are truly fit for the realization of God. Have not the Upaniṣads spoken of people — ever optimistic, strong and determined? One of the reasons why Swami Vivekananda loved the Upaniṣads is that they speak of strength and self-confidence. He loved the Kaṭhopaniṣad very much because, in it is found a young aspirant Nachiketa who could go to the God of Death for spiritual knowledge, saying to himself:

'I am the best amongst many.
I am mediocre amongst many.
What duties will Death ask me to do?'

He did not say he was nothing, the lowest of all, the worst amongst many, etc. He had not cultivated the habit of self-depreciation or self-denunciation like many so-called religious persons.

True religion requires the transformation of one's entire life and that does not come without hard struggle and complete dedication. One can struggle against overwhelming difficulties if one has the confidence that ultimately one will succeed. Swami Vivekananda placed emphasis also upon physical strength. Many a noble idea bears no fruit because the vehicle is poor in health. With a weak body one easily develops morbid despondency which is a great obstacle to religious life. So he loudly declared that one will reach God more easily or quickly with strong muscles and nerves developed by playing football than through the study of the Gita.

One revolutionary deduction from the spiritual truth of the Divine in man was that one could equally realize God through service to humanity as through prayer, meditation and temple worship. If God could be worshipped in a temple built of brick and mortar, God would be found much more in human forms. 'More minute than the minutest particle, infinitely bigger than the biggest thing, the Self is hidden in the cavity of man's heart,' says the Upaniṣad. So Swami Vivekananda said: Serve the poor, nurse the sick, give education to the uneducated — that will be a better form of worship in the modern age.

This message was greatly needful to India under the existing conditions of the country and appealed tremendously to the younger generation, especially to those who could not fully subscribe to many complexities of orthodox Hinduism. In this form Swami Vivekananda's idea of religion in India was mixed up with patriotism. Many young men were fired with this idea of serving the country. Many organized and joined even revolutionary movements to achieve political independence. It is interesting to note that several of the young men who joined the political movements at first, afterwards dedicated their lives completely to spiritual pursuits when their spiritual interests became deeper. This is a glaring example of how service to man leads to the service to God.

Nowadays it has become a vexed question whether patriotism is co-equal with, or a substitute for, religion, and in many men's minds Swami Vivekananda is viewed more as a lover of his country than a lover of God. Well, whereas with some to serve the suffering people of India is itself a religion, Swami Vivekananda's love for India was a part of his religion, a phase of his love for humanity, and according to his own words, the definition of God was the sum total of all beings. And if those who do not understand religion but believe in patriotism, will serve the cause of the country with complete dedication and ear-

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nest sincerity, they will soon find that the ideas of true religion have unconsciously but spontaneously awakened in them and they are on the way to the spiritual realization, that man and God are one. True nationalism leads to internationalism; true internationalism leads to true love for mankind as a whole; and true love for humanity leads to the true love of God, or arises from the realization of God as a direct experience in one's life.

The three great elements which constituted the life and message of Swami Vivekananda were his love of God or the realization of the Self, his great compassion, and his strength. One reacted on the others. His life on earth was a long-drawn realization of the Spirit. For a period in his early days, he suffered from conflicts and anguish for the direct experience of God. But that was only temporary. Soon he got the blazing light of the knowledge of the Highest Consciousness which was his home.

He was born with a compassionate heart. With growing years, coming into contact with human suffering, he rebelled against God, as it were. He could not find the reason why in the creation of God there should be so much misery. He considered the world devilish. Afterwards, with his spiritual achievements, he realized that the problem of evil in the world could not be explained on the human plane. Evil can be and must be transcended, but it cannot be explained. Afterwards, his only concern was to lift up the whole of humanity to a plane where evil cannot reach. 'I may have to give up the body,' he once said, 'but I will not rest until each individual finds that he is one with God.'

Strength was a great characteristic of Swami Vivekananda even in his younger days. Afterwards he radiated and scintillated strength. His very presence was strength-giving. Even his prayer to God was not a form of cringing supplication to God, but was the demanding attitude of his birthright. Even in his crises and difficulties he manifested nothing but strength. That became a part of his life, and a vital aspect of the religion he preached.

One who studies Swami Vivekananda and deeply ponders over his thoughts and ideas, cannot help catching these three characteristics. One finds the basis of religion is so rational, clear and living, that one is filled with the intense aspiration of following his precepts. Nay, one feels that those precepts have become almost a realization with one.

But religion did not become a self-centered isolation with him. He invariably was filled with the spirit of love for others and was seized with an aspiration to serve others. And simultaneously one sees the need and naturalness of strength in one's own life. One is fired with a spirit of strength. One catches the contagion of these qualities in one's mind and heart from the message of Swami Vivekananda. We do not say that these influences become at once lasting in their effect on one's life. They tend to disappear. To make them lasting one has to struggle and struggle vigilantly. That is spiritual practice. That is religion. That is what happens in the life of all spiritual aspirants. But in all our struggles and efforts, through all our hope and despair, Swami Vivekananda's message itself will be a source of great strength and power to us. For his message was not different from his life; his words were co-equal with his power and realization.

Despondency is not religion, whatever else it may be. By being pleasant always and smiling, it takes you nearer to God, nearer than any prayer. How can those minds that are gloomy and dull, love? If they talk of love it is false; they want to hurt others. Think of the fanatics; they make the longest faces, and all their religion is to fight against others in word and act. Think of what they have done in the past, and of what they would do now, if they were given a free hand.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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MESSAGE OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TO MODERN INDIA

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

[The following is a brief translation of the Presidential speech in Hindi by Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, at a public meeting held in connection with the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda, at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi on March 3, 1963. — *Ed.*]

As we all know, Swami Vivekananda was a unique personality. India has produced great men since ancient times, and Swami Vivekananda is one of them. These great men, these great of all ages, do not grow great simply in air. They grow in their times; they live in their times; and say things that are relevant to their times. They interpret old traditions and old beliefs and apply them to the problems of the new age. It is from this fact that their precepts derive their unusual strength. If we talk to you about old things, you may like them, you may admire them, you may even believe in them, but they have little relevance today. If we talk about the things of the day, as politicians do, you will be interested, as everybody is interested. But these have little depth. They do not move you. They may be interesting but you are likely to forget them after some time. Swami Vivekananda had both of them. He knew of the ancient basis of our approach to things and of our achievements; and he explained them to the people of today and explained to them in their own language. He was surcharged with the lore and learning of India, but he did not confine himself to India alone; it was because of this that his voice was listened to with attention in other lands as well and people there were impressed with what he had to say.

Some one may ask me what do I say to the children. Whom should they look up to for learning things; and there are many things to learn. But it is quite possible that I may not be able to place before them a name from the history of India as apt, as appropriate, as that of Swami Vivekananda. Let us look up to him, let us read him, let us learn from him many things, but above all one — the one for which he was particularly known and which manifested itself as energy, as force, as indomitable strength. Every word of his drips with this energy and he used this energy at such a terrific rate that he died young. He did not complete his 40th year and even prior to that he had shaken the whole of India, and people abroad and created an impression on their minds.

Vivekananda saw that India had degenerated into a weak nation. Indians are intelligent; they are brainy, they become doctors, they become engineers. This is all very good. But they are weak. The foremost quality that a people require is strength. If they do not have it, all their intelligence, all their knowledge becomes ineffective. Therefore the lesson he imparted was of infusing strength in the people, in every individual, in every nook and corner of India. During his short life he went all over India and preached; and what he taught made a powerful impact.

After him came Mahatma Gandhi. He taught us a number of things and the greatest of his teachings was that we remain fearless; the same lesson that Swami Vivekananda taught. Do not be afraid; stand fearless; because to the man who is fearless other things are comparatively easier. If we are afraid, if we are terrified, our intelligence and other faculties tend to weaken. The man who is fearless does not require to hide what he does. I shall say only this to you that you, particularly our youngmen, should get acquainted with the ideas of Swamiji. We cannot be so fortunate as to hear his voice, but we can at least read what he taught and what he wrote, and learn from it. You will

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find that even his words are packed with vigour. Whoever reads them feels their impact.

Today our country is facing a difficult situation. It is confronted with great problems. We have to resolve them. This cannot be done all at once. There is no magic key which we just turn and the difficulties vanish. It is a great test for us and for our country. We will gradually fulfil this test. Under these circumstances it becomes all the more necessary that we fearlessly stand up to these problems. If we do so, the problems which overawe us, will disappear. On this occasion I shall say that we should receive some light in our hearts from Swamiji. It will make it easier for us to find the way, because, as you know, Swamiji had a combination of both the old and the new.

The greatest problem before India is to arrive at a compromise between the old and the new. We have had our roots in this land for centuries. From a person who always looks up to the ancient we can learn many good things. But we live in the present day world. Even if we want to completely live in the ancient times we cannot do so. It is a different world. If we want to live completely only in the modern age, detached from the roots of ours from which we are derived, without learning from them and without having some sort of understanding of them, we tend to become, in a way, superficial.

Without roots nothing lives. There is no tree without roots. But if we are only roots that will not do and if it is only the upper portion of the tree without roots that will also not do. Both of them are essential. We have to correlate and combine both of them. Old world and ancient ideas, I think, are essential to a new world, which we should understand, and march ahead.

New questions arise and we look for their answers. But I feel this problem is the main problem. If we want to cut off ourselves from the world we can do so. Why should I say that we cannot do it? But I shall tell you what is in my mind, what I think. It appears to me that I have to face the problem that is in the world; and in a way, as far as possible, as much as we can, serve others, our country, our public, or the world, whatever you may like to call it. Because these days all of them are somewhat mixed up. But we can better understand the present and work in it when we know about our roots in the ancient India and profit from them. Swami Vivekananda had both these things. He knew the ancient Indian ideals and learning shaped by our great men and knew the world of today as well. That is why his words have so much power. It is a great idea that the Indian should be energetic, should be forceful. Without energy man is ineffective. I do not mean the physical strength as that of a wrestler, though that is also good; all types of strength are good, strength of heart, strength of mind, a sort of toughness, strength not to bow down before a wrong. We must acquire such a strength. It is then that we will be irresistible in our onward march.

There are numerous problems confronting our country. How are we to overcome them? It will not do only to tackle an enemy who comes from outside. We have to face the attacks and we will face them. But what is more difficult is a determination to face one's own weakness. But it cannot be hidden by shouting. We have to strengthen ourselves first. We must proceed along the correct path and purify our minds. And for doing all these things, as I have told you, the only example that I can place before you, from which children can learn is that of Swami Vivekananda. In him we find all these qualities. In a short span of life how he moved India, not only for a few days, but in a way that the movement still continues even after him. I did not come here to tell you anything. I came to offer my homage to Swamiji and to express the hope that the people of today, of tomorrow, our countrymen, particularly our children and youngmen, will keep before them the example and memory of Swami Vivekananda and learn from his writing and his life.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AS A LEADER OF THOUGHT

SWAMI TAPASYANANDA

[Swami Tapasyananda, a former Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*, is Head of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trivandrum. In this learned article he brings out beautifully Swamiji's contribution to Indian thought, and also the part played by him in resuscitating the Hindu religion, by defining the exact meaning of its vital tenets, which were hopelessly lost in the excrescences that had gathered round them through the ages. — *Ed.*]

Among the great men of India, Swami Vivekananda is unique for the fact that he occupies the first rank both as a teacher of India's ancient spiritual wisdom and as a leader of her modern national aspirations. His public activities extended over a brief span of about ten years only, but during this period he spoke and worked sufficiently to gain for him a front rank among the thinkers and patriots of India.

His main contribution to thought is the re-statement of the principles of the Sanātana Dharma (Eternal Law), which is the correct name for what is known today as Hinduism. Hinduism is a religion without a creed or a personal founder, and its history has an uninterrupted antiquity of about ten millenniums, during which it has absorbed several races and peoples with their own social practices and religious beliefs. As a consequence, it had developed a bewildering overgrowth of cults, myths, rituals and social practices, out of which the ordinary man was finding it difficult, nay, almost impossible, to distinguish the essential principles of his faith. Even erudite Sanskrit Pandits, however competent to expound the abstruse points of Indian Philosophy, found themselves at sea when required to state the principles common to all sects coming under Sanātana Dharma. They always equated Sanātana Dharma with Varṇāshrama Dharma, and thus interpreted a Universal Philosophy of religion as being a social system of hereditary castes and rigid rules of life. They fostered an elaborate system of mythology and rituals divorced from the proper philosophical background which gives them their spiritual significance. As a consequence, a Universal Philosophy was in danger of being understood as a cluster of polytheistic cults, magical rituals and outdated social practices.

This was the situation that confronted the new English-educated generation of Hindus towards the close of the 19th century when Swami Vivekananda appeared before the world. These new generations were not educated in Sanskrit and had therefore no access to the higher philosophies of India. Their English education had given them a historical sense and a rational scientific attitude which made them question every authority that was hitherto held sacrosanct. Many of them found solace in scepticism or in a thoughtless and naive type of materialism, but the more reflective looked with earnestness to their ancient culture for the bread of life. But its custodians had only stones to offer in the shape of caste, mythology and ritualism — a trinity which certainly failed to satisfy these quickened and critical minds. The consequence was that a spiritual vacuum was created in the minds of large sections of people.

If this position has changed considerably today, it is entirely due to the lead given by Swami Vivekananda to Indian thought by his re-statement of the principles of the Sanātana Dharma, distinguishing it from the setting of caste, ritualism and Pouranic cults with which it was inextricably bound. Several others have attempted such re-statements after his time, but his was the first and the most authentic attempt in modern times, and it still stands unexcelled with all the prophetic force and fervour of a new revelation, before which the academic presentation of later writers pale into

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insignificance. In this respect his pioneering work is comparable only to that of Vyāsa or Śri Śankara — of Vyāsa, who demonstrated the structural unity of Vedic thought, and of Śri Śankara, who systematized and expounded its philosophical implications. In common with these great men Swami Vivekananda too did not propound any new doctrines but claimed only to teach what the great Rishis had taught. But none the less he was original, and that originality lay, as in the case of his great predecessors mentioned, in his capacity to state the doctrine in concepts that link them with current thought and life while at the same time making no compromise in respect of the spiritual values they embody.

Thus the essence of the Universal Philosophy of Religion known as the Vedanta, which of late has been christened as the 'Perennial Philosophy' by Aldous Huxley, has been stated in a very brief, yet comprehensive manner, by the Swami as follows :—

1. Each soul is potentially divine ;

2. The goal is to manifest this divine within by controlling Nature, external and internal ;

3. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or all of these — and be free ;

4. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details.

This statement is so simple and brief and the modernity of its tone so apparent that it makes an immediate appeal to any reflective mind of today. And yet it is an uncompromising assertion of the doctrine of the Upaniṣads, and if the great Śankaracharya, who expounded the wisdom of the Upaniṣads in the past, were to come to life today, he would have congratulated its author in unmeasured terms for his faithfulness to Vedantic traditions in his re-statement of the teachings for the comprehension of the modern world.

Much of the eight volumes of Swami Vivekananda's published works is an elaboration of the doctrines implied in this statement. Systematic expositions are contained especially in his learned lectures on Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga, besides dissertations that are scattered everywhere in his general lectures on Hinduism.

Some of the special points in the Swami's exposition of India's spiritual wisdom may be here noted. He accepted that the Sanātana Dharma is based on the Vedas or Revelation, and that the Veda is 'Apourusheya' (not man-made), in the sense that it is eternal. But by Vedas he meant no books but the eternal spiritual laws which existed even before the Rishis discovered them, just as the Law of Gravitation existed even before its discovery by Newton. The teachings of the Vedas are not dogmas deriving authority from any personality or church. They are spiritual experiences open even today to all men who undergo the necessary training, irrespective of race or country. Records of spiritual experiences show that great minds in other countries and cultures too had identical experiences. Thus the Sanātana Dharma, though based on the Vedas, is eternal and universal. It is also scientific, being based on experience open to all.

The uniqueness of the Vedic doctrine lies in that it takes a man where he is in his spiritual evolution and helps him to progress towards the next stage. Thus no hard and fast dogmas about God and soul are enforced on all alike, because at different stages of growth the angle of vision changes and the evolving individual becomes fit for different conceptions of the ultimate verities. Thus when man is fully body-centred in his conception of himself, he thinks of the Divine as an extra-cosmic Being, and the soul and the Universe as entirely separate from Him. All the dualistic faiths of the world, including the vaunted monotheism of Semetic origin, mark this stage of growth. Further at this stage God is comprehended as power, as the mysterious and the tremendous, and the devotee feels a corresponding religious emotion that has popularly come to be known as 'fear of

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God' as contrasted with love of Him. At the next stage of evolution, when love of God develops in the heart, man begins to think of himself as a spiritual being forming a part of Him, and conceives of Him not as an extra-cosmic being, but as the Spirit immanent in all. At the highest stage of development, when thought has developed the capacity to be absolutely dispassionate and impersonal, the aspirant realizes the Divine as his very self, as the substratum of what he and all beings conceive to be their individuality, and is thus established in the sense of non-duality.

It is this apprehension of Divine Immanence in all beings that made the Swami lay down the dictum that every soul is potentially divine. The concept of potentiality alone gives an adequate interpretation of the idea that entities experienced now as tangible and concrete can remain unmanifested and imperceptible in their germinal condition, as if they were not there at all. A tiny banian seed gives no clue to an unfamiliar onlooker regarding the mighty tree that is to come out of it in future. Unseen and unsuspected, its gigantic structure is involved in the almost imperceptible dimensions of the tiny seed. The same is the case with the personality of man. Unknown and unsuspected powers await development in his frail frame, and in his nature, akin to that of a mere animal, lies a Buddha hidden, involved. Evolution is the impulsion of these potential effects to manifest and gain expression. At the lower levels of evolution, this process is accomplished by the slow and unguided processes of Nature. The evolutionary impulse brings out more and more complexity of structures in the organic matter until the living cell is produced. Out of the living cell the same impulse evolves higher and higher forms with structures that are increasingly complex but unified in function. These organized cells, forming into living bodies become the field for the emergence of mind, and in mind the self-conscious Ego, the Jiva, appears. With the appearance of the ego possessed of the powers of self-conscious reason, a new impetus is given to evolutionary impulses. Hitherto higher forms have been evolved by the natural forces working from within and without, and the organism living in harmony with them; but with the advent of the self-conscious reason, a new factor, the self-conscious effort of the ego as also of the community to which that ego belongs, becomes an equally important factor, giving greater direction and speed to the processes of Nature. In place of living in harmony with Nature, the organism begins to struggle against it. The evolutionary impulse manifests as the struggle of the self-conscious ego, to gain mastery over the forces of Nature which seem to stand opposed to it and thwart its urge for freedom and the expression of its higher divine potentialities. Thus, according to Swami Vivekananda, the goal of life at the human level is the manifestation of the soul's inherent Divinity by controlling Nature within and without.

This description of the purpose of life from the Vedantic point of view is perhaps the most comprehensive account of it ever given. It includes all the accomplishments of human endeavour — both the Aparā vidyā and the Parā vidyā. The Nature outside is constituted of the whole of the external environment of man, both physical and social. Physical Nature is controlled through the insight one gains into the working of its laws and applying that knowledge to develop technology, by means of which life is made more secure, leisurely and comfortable, and man is enabled to increase his power by using forces of Nature to secure his ends. His social environment is constituted of his fellow beings and it is by establishing right relationships with them through the development of a healthy society and polity that this part of his environment is controlled. Thus through science and technology, control over external environment as physical Nature is established, while the development of a well-knit society and a well-ordered State contributes to the control of Nature as social environment.

It will thus be seen that the Swami's conception of spiritual evolution was very

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comprehensive. He was not one of those ascetic thinkers who scorned matter in order to boost up the spirit. The spirit being conditioned by matter in its earthly manifestation, it is incumbent that a healthy and prosperous society has to be developed by man in order that the individuals constituting it may get the physical requirements that form the essential background for higher cultural developments. Thus, science, technology, social and industrial organization, statecraft and all such institutions of man for controlling the natural environment, both physical and social, come within the field of Vedanta. But it must be noted that it forms only its outer field, the inner field being constituted of his efforts to conquer Nature within. The internal environment of man is his own mind. The mastery of it is the main task of culture in its higher spiritual sense and the special field of Vedanta and of every other system of religious ethics and philosophy. The control of external Nature is only an indirect aid, and in a wisely ordered society, the institutions developed by man for effecting this control have to be consciously motivated by the higher aim.

The means of effecting the control of mind or internal Nature and realizing the Divine potentiality of man are what are called the Yogas — Bhakti Yoga, Karma Yoga, Jñāna Yoga and Raja Yoga. These Yogas are based on the three basic faculties of the human mind — feeling, willing and thinking. In each of these Yogas, the culture of one or the other of these plays the dominant role, but what the Swami always pleaded for was a judicious way of culturing the whole man, taking at the same time into account the peculiarities of the individual's nature.

When the Swami uses the word 'religion' in his lectures, he really means Yoga, for to him religion is realization. Yoga is the technique that leads to this realization — the understanding and expression of the Divine possibilities in man. Understood as Yoga, religion becomes more a psychological concept, and ceases to be a mere set of doctrines, observances, associations and allegiances, as commonly understood. These latter are increasingly reduced to the position of symbols, valuable not so much in themselves, but for their capacity to lead the mind of man step by step to that state in which it gets transformed from animality to the state of divine perception and becomes capable of apprehending the Infinite and the Absolute. The self-conscious mind of man has got in it latent powers of apprehension subtler than perception and inference. Just as dead matter has life involved in it, life mind in it, and mind reason in it, so has the self-conscious mind got involved in it the powers of intuition, the faculty of immediate apprehension of the Divine substratum that is the background and basis of the entire cosmic manifestation. The purpose of evolution is thus the emergence of higher and more complete orders of organization which become in turn the base for the release of higher and higher powers of apprehension, until with the emergence of intuition the ego apprehends its substratum, becomes transformed thereby and realizes its true individuality in its universal infinite background. Up to human level evolution is achieved by living in harmony with nature, but with the birth of self-conscious reason it is through the struggle with, and mastery of, the natural environment, both external and internal, that evolution achieves its end.

Religion understood as Yoga is the technique of this self-mastery, which is the same as mastery of Nature within. It ceases to be in conflict with science and becomes the most important factor in the evolution of the race.

Viewed as Yoga, religions cease also to be conflicting among themselves as they do when they are identified exclusively with propositions, events, rituals, institutions and so on. No proposition can exhaust the Infinite and the Absolute, nor any ritual entrap it, and no institution monopolize it. All these are but its symbols, approximations and pointers, very useful in purifying, equipping and guiding the mind of man, but none of them can exclusively contain the Infinite and the Absolute.

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The claim that one's own religion alone is true and those of others are false, is like the claim of everyone that his watch is absolutely correct. No watch is in fact so exact. They are all correct in the sense that they point towards an absolutely correct time with varying degrees of error. The same is the case with the claim of any religion to be the exclusive torch-bearer of truth. It explains also how there can be many religions and yet they can all be true. They can all co-exist and grow in their own way, each trying to learn from the other the special excellences for which it is noted.

The practical implications that the Swami has drawn from the doctrine of man's inherent divinity is perhaps his most important contribution to thought. He called this Practical Vedanta. The Swami maintains that if Divinity is our background, our religious faith should be based not on fear, but on a sense of one's inherent strength born of the feeling that one is a child of God. Faith in one's own self, in one's higher nature that forms one's background, is the basis of all spiritual growth. Without this faith, faith in God has no meaning. Sin is tantamount to weakness arising from the denial of one's inherent Divinity and virtue synonymous with strength born of a sense of one's own Divine heritage. Self-confidence, fearlessness, and self-expression become the watchword for man in all fields of life if the Gospel of Practical Vedanta is accepted.

Worship also receives a new meaning. While ritualistic worship and contemplation retain their full validity in spiritual discipline, social service also comes to have an equally important place. Service of man becomes service of God. As God is present in all as the immanent spirit, life of the individual and society is an effort on the part of Nature to manifest that divinity latent in all. If an aspirant maintains this outlook on life and performs his duties towards individuals and society as an offering to the divinity immanent in all, he performs real worship. Practical Vedanta, therefore, converts work into worship.

THE VEDANTIC NATIONALISM OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

T. M. P. MAHADEVAN

[Dr T. M. P. Mahadevan, M.A., PH.D., is Head of the Department of Philosophy, University of Madras, as well as an author of many books. In this article he deals with nationalism as it emerged in the West and contrasts it with Swamiji's idea of Indian nationalism. He also delineates how Swamiji applied the ideal of Advaita Vedanta for the national regeneration of India. — *Ed.*]

One of the very first nationalist leaders of modern India was Swami Vivekananda; and it is to him that we owe the unique nationalism that is India's.

The spirit of nationalism that arose in Europe at the close of the Middle Ages, and was responsible for the rise of the nation-states in that continent, was by its very nature narrow in its outlook and scope. The states became independent of the Roman Church; each became a self-centred entity with exclusive interests and claims. In course of time, some of the European states grew to be opulent and powerful; they could not contain themselves; and therefore they sprawled into the Orient and Africa, competed with one another in carving out empires; and a few of them — Britain being the foremost — ended by becoming great colonial powers. Thus, European nationalism was primarily a political

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phenomenon : it enabled its constituents to develop into political states with the power to expand and to be aggressive.

India which was one of the major victims of European expansionism felt helpless against superior might ; having conquered India politically, England sought to make a cultural conquest of its people ; and with this end in view English education was introduced in the country. The aim of this education was to create a race of Indians who would be — to use an expression of Sir John Woodroffe's — the mānasa-putras (mind-born children) of the English. In order that India could come into its own again, the first task that had to be accomplished was a reconquest of the English-educated sections of the people. They had to be dehypnotised out of their belief that the English were a superior race, and that for India to continue to be a crown-colony would be a blessing. To a certain extent this was done by the pioneers of the present Indian Renaissance like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, and by the publications of the ancient Indian texts by Western Indologists like Max Muller. But the first great dynamic leader of the movement for reawakening was Swami Vivekananda. Not only did he rouse the dormant spirit of India into a sense of her strength and potentialities, but he also made the West recognize the civilizing influence of India abroad in the past and her invaluable legacy which could ensure the human progress of the future. Thus he was the first to fix the tone and tenor of Indian nationalism. It was because his nationalism was rooted in the wisdom of Vedanta that it became unique, and did not set itself against internationalism or the idea of one-world.

September 11, 1893, was an eventful day in the history of India *vis-a-vis* the West, for that was the inauguration day of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago ; and on that day Swami Vivekananda, in the short speech that he made, put India in the proper perspective before the peoples of the West. In the very form of salutation to the audience he chose to adopt — 'Sisters and Brothers of America' — there was a whole philosophy contained, the philosophy of universalism as taught by Vedanta. After saluting the youngest of the nations, America, in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world, the Vedic order of sannyasins, he expounded his thesis, basing it on two illustrative passages taken from the Hindu scriptures. The one from the *Bhagavadgītā* and the other which is a popular prayer, declare that the paths to Godhead may differ, but all of them are efficacious in taking the votary to the goal. The Swami appealed to the representatives of the different religions assembled in the Parliament, and through them, to the wide world, for not only tolerance but also for sympathy for one another's faith. 'We believe not only in universal toleration,' said the Swami, 'but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth.' He showed how meaningless it was to seek to convert men from one faith into another. The ideal should be that every one progresses in his own faith : a Hindu becomes a better Hindu, a Christian a better Christian, a Muslim a better Muslim. The Swami expressed the hope that the bell that had tolled that morning in honour of the convention might be the death-knell of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal. 'The Parliament of Religions,' he said in conclusion, 'has shown to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possession of any church in the world and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of others, he is to be pitied and told that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance : "Help and not fight", "Assimilation and not destruction", "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension".'

In the subsequent speeches the Swami made

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in the Parliament, and in his public lectures and class-talks later on in America and England, he presented the all-comprehensive philosophy of Vedanta, showed how India's record in religion was grand and glorious, and pointed out that India required at the time, not the import of religion, but the means of physical sustenance of her masses.

On his return to India, Swami Vivekananda made a whirl-wind tour of the country, exhorting the people to cultivate a sense of patriotism and work for the all-round development of India so that the world at large might be benefited. In everyone of his speeches, he made powerful and impassioned appeals to his people to organize themselves, to become strong, and be a nation again; he asked them to realize their own greatness and be proud of their heritage.

'My India arise!' the Swami declared in one of his Madras lectures, 'Where is your vital force? In your Immortal Soul . . . Each nation, like each individual, has one theme in this life, which is its centre, the principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony. If any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries, that nation dies. In one nation political power is its vitality, as in England. Artistic life in another and so on. In India religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life. And, therefore, if you succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up either politics or society the result will be that you will become extinct. Social reform and politics have to be preached through that vitality of your religion. Every man has to make his own choice; so has every nation. We made our choice ages ago. And it is the faith in an Immortal Soul. I challenge anyone to give it up. How can you change your nature?'

But, religion, the Swami urged, should not be mistaken for weakness. 'What our country now wants,' he said, 'are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills, which nothing can resist, which will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. That is what we want, and that can only be created, established, and strengthened, by understanding and realizing the ideal of the Advaita, that ideal of the Oneness of all.'

Translating the ideal of Advaita-Vedanta into active nationalism, Swami Vivekananda asked everyone to seek for God, not in the heavens, but in the heart of every being — especially in the poor and the depressed. 'This is the only God that is awake, our own race, everywhere His hands, everywhere His feet, everywhere His ears, He covers everything. All other Gods are sleeping. What vain Gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the God that we see all round us, the Virāt? When we have worshipped this, we shall be able to worship all other Gods.'

The Swami asked the would-be reformers not to rest till they had done something to raise the masses from their state of misery and squalor. The reformers should go about their tasks not with an air of superior condescension, but in a spirit of service to the Divine. Let them not condemn, but construct. There was no use preaching religion to those that were hungry. Let India become physically strong and materially prosperous through utilizing the Western scientific knowledge and technology.

The supreme aim, however, should be to foster the spirituality of India. Spirituality is the backbone of India. We have never been a conquering race. Our conquests in the past have been spiritual. Other nations, both in the East and the West, have accepted our ideals and concepts. But we never used compulsion. 'We never preached our thoughts with fire and sword.' In his very first public address delivered in the East — in Colombo — Swami Vivekananda declares, 'India's gift to the world is the light spiritual.' And his one burning ambition was that this light should go forth again from India to light a darkening world.

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The light spiritual which is the precious possession of India is Vedanta. Vedanta knows no narrowness. 'What can hold any more the allegiance of cultured humanity but the most wonderful, convincing, broadening, and ennobling ideas, that can be found only in that most marvellous product of the soul of man, the wonderful voice of God, the Vedanta,' asks Swami Vivekananda. Vedanta is our national philosophy; in content it is international and universal. Again, in the words of the Swami, 'Vedanta, the philosophy of the Upaniṣads, ...has been the first, as well as the final, thought on the spiritual plane that has ever been vouchsafed to man.'

It is the Vedantic nationalism of Swami Vivekananda, the patriot-monk, that gave the direction to the ethical politics of Mahatma Gandhi by means of which India has become free and independent. It is the Swami's leadership, again that has made India avoid the narrow and dangerous path of arrogant nationalism, and take to the road of peaceful co-existence and co-operative endeavour towards the goal of commonweal (*sarvodaya*) and spiritual unity.

SPIRITUAL VALUES IN EDUCATION

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

[Swami Vimalananda needs no introduction to our readers. His masterly expositions have been regularly appearing in the *Vedanta Kesari*. This article of his substantially forms the paper which he presented to the seminar on 'Spiritual Values in Education' held in connection with the centenary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda at Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore Dt. from 31-3-63 to 2-4-63 and inaugurated by the President of India. — *Ed.*]

An enquiry into the place of Spiritual Values in Education is supremely important at this juncture of our history, when scientific materialism tries to account for man's behaviour as though he were merely a puppet controlled in all his actions and thoughts by the inexorable laws of Physics and Chemistry and physiological psychology. Mechanistic and deterministic points of view have almost exterminated spiritual and cultural values in many regions of thought and action and modern technological sciences have brought humanity to the brink of a suspected Universal shipwreck. Though India has clung to her ideal of peaceful co-existence, circumstances have compelled her to equip herself scientifically and technologically for keeping in line with the progress of humanity and for ensuring her own protection. As a consequence education in India too, cannot be something very different from what is accepted by the scientific nations of the world.

How Education came to be what it is Today

It is well-known that parents in ancient times instructed their children in the arts and crafts which they were to practise when they attained adulthood. While learning the responsibility of elders the younger generation acquired certain spiritual values through love and sympathy which the ancestor had for the descendant.

Through social diffusion and change later on, vocations multiplied giving rise to communities organized into guilds based on division of labour. Thus education became a specialized profession and knowledge was imparted to new generations based on ancestral usage. The professional teacher was maintained by the voluntary contributions of the community. He taught what he himself had learned from his teachers, and his aim was to make the pupils fit to meet the needs of home and the clan, and what was considered his trans-

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worldly ends. The best of the pupils was rendered competent to enter the assembly of wise elders, or the court of a king as his minister, or to be his spiritual director. Knowledge was acquired through apprenticeship, and close personal contact gained therefrom helped to keep the precepts and example of the teacher bright before the eyes of the disciples. The *Chandogya Upaniṣad* (7. 8. 1) brings this out vividly in a crisp passage the purport of which reads thus :

> 'When a man has acquired intuitive power by taking proper food, he rises ; rising, he serves ; serving, he approaches nearer ; approaching nearer, he sees, hears, reflects, understands, acts and knows.'

The Upaniṣadic thinkers wished that a youth should have physical and intellectual strength acquired through proper food — we may add that food included mental pabulum also. This gave to the young student agility to serve the superiors and teachers ; service rendered gave the student an opportunity to gain closer contact with the givers of knowledge and make himself dearer to them. Thus coming closer with a concentrated mind, he observed the teacher's acts, reflected and understood the truth, put into practice what has been learned, and experienced the result. There are many touching scenes describing such a relation between the teachers and the taught given in the epics and *purāṇas*.

At that time there was no Intermediary in the Mart of Education

In those early days of education, there was no intermediary between the teacher and the taught. The preceptor was contented with the services of the disciples, or small payments received from them in kind. He formed his own syllabi based on usage ; and he was free to reject or take pupils as he thought fit. Dissemination of knowledge was considered the most meritorious act, and so at great personal sacrifice, and under austere discipline, the teacher himself strove to become an embodiment of learning and wisdom. Such a teacher was eager to share his knowledge with the poor but worthy students without receiving any payment. No wonder such preceptors received divine honours from society, and shed a spiritual halo around them.

The Development of Modern Education

There was undoubtedly great intrinsic worth in the traditional education of India, of which we get shining pictures in books on the subject. It must not, however, be ignored that the scope of the system was very limited, and that only very small number of people were in the region lighted by education and the rest had no intellectual learning, or even higher training in the arts of life. All over the world educational practices were not much different, because times were not mature then for public instruction. Conditions of living were severe, and even communities living in close neighbourhood were cut off from each other for lack of common interests of any abiding nature. Social survival in such a situation was secured through reproduction and transmission of racial traditions in each group. Gradually, increased communication and trade contacts brought greater social diffusion and increased prosperity in many regions. Improvement of education has always depended on improved social conditions and peaceful times. This has happened in all key-places of civilization. Variation from tradition was not frowned upon in prosperity, and in some cases it was encouraged. There was a ferment in the Gangetic Valley when political peace and economic adequacy were made possible under wise Kshatriya kings and merchant princes, at the time of the Upaniṣads and early Buddhism. This happened also in the Periclean Greece, Imperial Rome, and later Europe. It was prosperous economic conditions created through imperialism and industrial revolution that changed the face of education.

Modern education even in Europe is not more than three centuries old. The idea of considering the school as a means of lifting the young, as through a series of locks in a canal, to the then existing level of adult expe-

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rience had to be partly superseded, when wise experimentalists proposed the scheme of using educational institutions to redirect the level of adult experience itself. Education came to be fashioned as a lever of social advance. Science and technology brought communities and nations to proximity, and knowledge achieved in different branches of human endeavour, down the ages and in diverse regions, was pooled together in the interest of common humanity and further advance. This could not have been done before great political, economic, and technological changes were possible and isolated medieval communities and groups were welded into larger units. Thus education became dynamic in Europe. From there we copied our system in the last century.

As a dynamic social expression, education today is neither recreating the educand in a previously conceived image of perfection, nor merely lifting the young to the level of adult experience. The purpose of education now has come to be recognized as an attempt to adjust the youth to the changing society and environment in which he has to live ; and so scientific and technological training has come to occupy the foreground of formal education. Economic and political influences today exercise decisive sway over the whole machinery of public instruction. The teacher and the taught are no more free to choose their aims and methods, and both have to fit into a larger unit and function in a manner completely predetermined by thoughts and forces that shape the State. The sovereign position which education enjoyed in earlier ages had to be abandoned under the impact of economic, political, social, and psychological forces that have newly emerged through mutual action and reaction. Empiricism and rationalism reign supreme in the field of scientific education today, and trans-worldly values are banished beyond its frontiers. Even the social viewpoint, which is often admired, is now rooted in crass naturalism. As I have hinted early, these trends are clearly visible in our own educational practices, as it is inescapable for all progressive people. It is in such a context that we are trying to explore a place for spiritual values in Education.

What does 'Spiritual' signify?

Before proceeding further, I wish to examine the meaning of the word spiritual in the expression 'Spiritual Values'. I do not know whether there is an exact equivalent for the word spiritual in Sanskrit, or other allied languages of India. *Adhyātma* and *Ādhyātmika* appear to be not very suitable, because the word Ātman in philosophic contexts stand for Reality beyond mind and intellect. Perhaps the concept of *Daivī Sampat* in the *Bhagavad Gītā* comes nearest to spirituality.

Spiritual and spirituality are purely biblical words that have acquired added senses by usage. Neither literary usage nor the consensus of religious people give a single fixed sense to the term. The finer perceptions of life are denoted by the word spiritual in French usage. In this sense, spirituality is not absent in decent art, craft and poetry, nay, even in technology. The American Transcendentalists considered spirituality to be the special mark of a superior intellect. If that is taken to be so, ethical values may not be a concomitant of spirituality. Christian evangelists employ the word spirituality to denote warmer religious notions. For the first time the word 'spiritual' appears in the *New Testament* where it stands for the character of the man who has entered the Kingdom of God. Jesus Christ demanded that a man must be born again to inherit the Kingdom of God. Christian churches would interpret this rebirth as the outcome of the acceptance of the Holy Spirit. A new birth through interior culture, or *samskāra*, is accepted to be the door leading to spirituality in all the great religions of the world. A true spiritual life transcends natural life and religious formalism. I may not omit to say here that spiritual life has nothing to do with spiritism or spiritualism.

Religion and Spirituality

All human knowledge arose in olden times as part of religion, and so the range of religion

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was vast. Though the expressions of religion are multitudinous, spirituality may be considered the headquarters of it. The crucial test of religion is spirituality viewed as *anubhūti*, or realization of the higher religious values. The religion of authority is far removed from the religion of the spirit. Spirituality is the mark of a life dedicated to certain principles ; and a truly spiritual man is great in deed and truth and not merely in reputation or appearance. To ask for the proof of a Buddha, a Christ, a Śankara, a Ramakrishna, or a Vivekananda would be to ask where the sun is in the sky. The majesty and beauty of spiritual acts proceeding even from much lesser people become evident by themselves. Kindness, tenderness, forgiveness and willingness to communicate knowledge to the ignorant, and not getting weary of doing good, are extolled as spiritual qualities from times immemorial. The genuinely spiritual man weaves the stuff of everyday existence into the tissue of worship. He finds that the true place of the soul of man is in the current of eternal love which sets out from God and returns to God.

A man becomes spiritual only when he is purified, enlightened and transformed. The following words of Swami Vivekananda convey to us a thrill of spiritual power :

> 'Religion is experience. Getting the Lord, we get all. To know God is to utterly sacrifice self. Religion is not intellectual jargon at all, but realization. When a man is under the control of the senses, he is of this world. When he has controlled the senses, he has renounced. There is an ocean of difference between renunciation and idleness. So to see the great facts of religion, the method of those who have already seen must be followed.'

It would be unwise on our part, though it may not be possible to give empirical proof, to cavil at the common conclusions of all great spiritual leaders of humanity.

> 'It is my firm opinion', said Mahatma Gandhi, 'that no culture has treasures so rich as ours. We have not known it. We have been made even to depreciate its study, and depreciate its value. We have almost ceased to live it. An academic grasp without practice behind it is like an embalmed corpse, perhaps lovely to look, but nothing to inspire or ennoble. My religion forbids me to belittle or disregard other cultures, as it insists, under pain of civil suicide, upon imbibing and living my own. Whilst I have freely acknowledged my debt to Western culture, I can say that whatever service I have been able to render to the nation has been due *entirely* to the retention by me of Eastern Culture to the extent it has been possible. I have been thoroughly useless to the masses as an Anglicized, denationalized being, knowing little of, caring less for, and perhaps even despising their ways, habits, thoughts and aspirations..... If India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy religious instruction of its youths must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction.'

In some other contexts Gandhiji expressed :

> 'I acknowledge no other God but the one God of Truth and righteousness. I will not be a traitor to God, to please the whole world. I would not live for a single moment without religion.... My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from my religion. I go further and say that every activity of a man of religion must be derived from his religion, because religion means being bound to God, that is to say God rules your every breath.... I believe in Advaita, I believe in the essential unity of man, and for that matter, of all that lives..... Religion is a heart grasp ; it is necessary to do anything in the right manner.'

It is unnecessary to enlarge here upon the nature and importance of spiritual values and their acceptance by the greatest and the best in the world.

The world as Fact and Value

With the above preamble I would now concentrate upon the thesis that spiritual values must have a place in education lest it may degenerate into scientific bestiality. Science and religion, I believe, are two modes of looking at the universe — the one looks upon it as fact and the other as value. The world as imaged in science is not complete, final or conclusive. Science develops through contact with phenomena, spirituality through introspection and contemplation. Science is deaf to emotional appeal, spirituality is purification, transformation and expansion of emotion. In science, desires must be subordi-

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nated to fact and law; in spirituality desires must be directed to higher and higher values. While science extends and makes precise sensory perception and reasoning, spirituality looks within and utilizes reason to go beyond reason. It is romanticism that is opposed to reason and not spirituality. The experiments and discoveries of science are external to the subject, those of spirituality are within himself, but applicable to life outside. While observation, classification, contrast and abstraction are essential for science, they are only helpful to spirituality. Spirituality does not deny forms from outside, but transcends them from within. Science discovers laws in which fresh observations may create rupture, and the laws themselves may be altered or abandoned; spirituality, on the other hand, is based on laws that are broad enough to include all fresh data. No man of science is permanently in the scientific mode; a spiritual man is no more spiritual, if the least of his thoughts and actions fail to comport with his spiritual attitude. The judgments of a scientist as well as of a spiritual man cannot be rated high outside the spheres of both. A man of science believes that human intellect, and powers of reasoning, would rectify all errors committed by man by further application of intellect and reasoning. The spiritual man believes that a message from beyond intellect and reason only can cure the residual errors of the intellect. Despite this contrast, human well-being owes enormously to both. So it should be our endeavour to assure the right place for science and for spiritual values in our education so that it may not be one-sided, mutually cancelling, or self-destructive.

Destructive trends of Science

The ideal for all education is the achievement of a sound mind in a sound body in a sound society. Scientific progress and human welfare can be accomplished only by making an approach to this goal. I believe that mere humanism inspired by scientific naturalism cannot achieve this. Science that is the marvel of enlightened humanity may not decree its own doom by consigning itself to the hands of indiscreet politicians. The secrets of total annihilation which science has discovered at such a tremendous cost were not meant to destroy itself. But unless spiritual values are acceptable to those who have paid for science and technology and who therefore control it, no assurance can be given on the point. It must not be forgotten that variation in quantity affects the quality of any product, and what is designed often changes the outlook of the designer. Science and technology are now wedded not only for the production of what is essential for the happiness and well-being of humanity, but also to forces that create, organize and sustain those gadgets that satisfy even man's baser instincts. I quote below from earlier writers, Hobbes, Freud and the like, a list of human tendencies that are unspiritual and directly contribute to human misery, and request you to examine how advance of scientific naturalism or rational outlook among the educated have helped to weed out or suppress them:

1. Natural passions carry men to partiality, pride, revenge and the like.
2. Self-love make men partial to themselves.
3. Love of comfort is not compatible with consideration for others.
4. It is foolish and dishonest to hoard up more than what one can make use of.
5. A fit of anger is a nail in your coffin.
6. Natural passions keep men mutually in awe; so they must be tied to the fear of punishment lest they rob and spoil one another.
7. Men look for respect from others, but little they value other men; from this arise emulation, quarrel, friction, war.
8. Chief end of civilized society is preservation of the property of all the members.
9. Worth begets envy in baser minds.
10. Greed for gain and power blind men to distinction between right and wrong.
11. Ostentatious display of wealth is the most powerful incentive to illicit greed for gold.
12. Interlocking groups of selfish men arrange to cover up each other's infractions.

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13. Rarely a man will do a thing as another man wants, if he has the power to do as he wants.

14. Men can represent by words good in the likeness of evil and evil in the likeness of good, and augment or diminish the apparent greatness of good and evil, disconcerting other men and troubling their peace at pleasure.

15. If we are in a society in which we are compelled to absorb false and lying words, we are unconsciously breathing a poisonous air. We use words without caring to see how they affect those who hear them.

The above gnomic citations from a wide range of writers show that the advance of science and technology have not changed man who is half animal. Perhaps cruelty, crime and fraud have increased in volume and intensity in some areas because of greater subtilty and scientific skill, shared more extensively. In such a situation, a votary of science might reply that when a new economic and social order will be created that will cure all these defects. But a wise observer might say that as long as science whets only materialist greed for personal and social welfare without cultural and spiritual values, human behaviour will remain the same as pictured in the quotations extracted above.

Oneness of All Existence

Let us turn to what a noble soul who prized spiritual values above all else has prescribed for human uplift. Swami Vivekananda declared before a band of young disciples at Thousand Island Park :

> 'Taoists, Confucianists, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Mohammedans, Christians, Zoroastrians, all preached the golden rule, and in almost the same words; but only the Hindus have given the *rationale;* because they saw the reason: Man must love others, because these others are himself. There is but One.... Learn to feel yourself in other bodies, to know that we are all one.'

This is the highest value Swamiji asked us to cherish, and in this, I may add, he was only echoing the voice of scores of earlier sages who had the same inner vision. Recent Western thinkers, too, have come to the conviction that morality is fundamentally the expression of humanity as a whole through the individual. How can this world-sense be inculcated, unless we accept a philosophy of education that supports spiritual values? It is said that every suffering individual in this world represents a failure of human wisdom and common humanity. This idea of common humanity cannot be a mathematical addition, but an intuitive spiritual realization that all this is one, past, present and future — *Puruṣa evedam sarvam yad bhūtam yac ca bhavyam.*

This doctrine must be made the pivot on which all types of education must turn; then only thousands of youngsters that come out of our educational institutions will feel that human birth is for love and service and not merely for pleasures. Then only they will have the mentality to do good irrespective of even the gratitude of the recipient. Then only an inner urge will be felt by them for developing a higher moral nature that will lay the foundation for upright conduct and character, that will make right social combination possible, and right social combination is at the root of the welfare State. An echo of the Puruṣa-sūkta line I quoted is audible in St. Paul's words :

> Whom, therefore, Ye ignorantly worship, Him I declare unto you. He is not far from every one of us. In Him we live and move and have our being.

Tennyson again expressed the same idea when he said, 'closer is He than breathing; nearer than hands and feet'. Rebellious and restless man has safety only when he realizes the One Reality shining in and through every soul. Every one who receives education, whether technical or philosophical, must bear in mind that neither ambition nor self-interest, neither fame nor power, can be the highest social motive.

I have to make it clear here that if I have uttered any word or placed any personal stress derogatory to what is implied by science, it applies only to scientific technique that is made

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ancillary to commercial and political passions that increase sensuality and irrationalism of man and not to the true pursuit of science in the temple of truth, undertaken with cultivated detachment and genuine reverence. Great scientists who have sacrificed themselves for the love of man deserve divine honours. Again when I have extolled spiritual values and pleaded for spirituality, I should not be taken to have lent support to all those misguided or unknowing enthusiasts of religion who wittingly or unwittingly bluff others and fool themselves.

Psychic Evolution of the Taught

It is common knowledge that schools and colleges exist to help youngsters to acquire habitual and constructive abilities in order to adjust themselves to, and control, their environments effectively. This is accomplished not merely by external changes and manipulations, but through psychic evolution. Man is made for society as much as for enjoyment of his own refined higher life. Both these ends are achieved by the interaction of self-regarding and other-regarding virtues. Education that does not develop right dispositions must be considered defective. An education that fails to humanize the relation between man and man, whatever else it might have achieved, is no education at all. An education that cannot ensure honesty in governments is dry at the spring. One who cannot say 'to be just is better than being unjust' has wasted his years in schools. Yet we experience this often and in some countries cost of crimes is many times more than cost of education. One who has spiritual convictions does not throw up the hands and say with the psychologist: 'Moral codes demand the impossible, because urges, like the tropical storms, sweep away fragile decisions, determinations and commitments.' The spiritual man believes that faith can move mountains and so he marches to victory, may be through many defects, because his faith in himself is irrevocable, and because the sense of duty arouses in him moral emotions that are invincible. There is an ethics based on desire and an ethics based on renunciation. The one stresses mutual struggle, the other inspires mutual help. The ethics of renunciation emphasizes not the desire of the individual, but of society or humanity at large. The ethics of desire entirely relies on statutes and law courts, gaols and the police, mental homes and reformatories for establishing peace and order. Spirituality cannot be equated with asceticism, but it can never be bereft of genuine altruism.

We should do well to make ourselves familiar with the recent penetrating analysis of altruism given by Professor Pitirim Sorokin. It is the sublimity of a given act of love which makes it altruistic. It is callousness of conduct that makes it anti-altruistic. Minimum of altruistic conduct demands: Do good to others, harm none, and render to each his own. A person who exercises his legal rights and performs legal duties when they do not violate his rights and duties, keeps himself just in the margin of altruism. Only when this marginal altruism is transcended and when the individual freely sacrifices his rightful interests in favour of the well-being of another, refrains from harming him, even though his legal rights entitles him to do so, and helping him in various ways, though law does not demand such action, only then real altruism begins. Obligatory legal conduct resulting from external compulsion cannot be altruistic. Genuine altruism is an exalted spiritual value, for the motive of it is pure as it is free from any consideration of pleasure or utility. True friendship which is an absolute end in itself may be contrasted with pseudo-friendship which anticipates pleasure and profit and these may be cited as illustrations respectively of genuine and impure altruism. The sublimest form of altruism knows no difference between friend and enemy; the sage who sees the Self in all is the sublimest altruist. Our education usually inculcates only legal marginal autruism which is often witnessed in social workers and officers rendering certain help by, merely, performing their duty for which they

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are paid. Even that much is not found in hypocritical pseudo-altruism. Unless spiritual values are inculcated in every possible manner from the start of education, genuine altruism can never become a social factor. Perhaps our country and world is today resounding with hypocritical pseudo-altruism — an altruism that is limited within speech reactions and ideology. Real altruism must manifest in overt actions performed freely for its own sake. This is impossible unless graded spiritual values are recognized throughout the process of education.

In the above paragraphs I have accepted the position of Gandhiji who considered morals, ethics and religion to be convertible, and who held that universal essentials of religion must be taught to all. If there are still higher spiritual values, they need not directly come within the sphere of general education. But there is definitely a place for spiritual values in education in so far as character is the backbone of all education. If universities send out physically wrecked, socially dumb, spiritually empty, and vocationally misfit personalities our society can never be sound. This state of affairs can be diminished, or prevented, only by recognizing spiritual values in education through graded moral instruction and training. Economic and political rivalries, crooked politics, national suspicion and jingoism thrive where spiritual values are staved off from education.

Before concluding this paper I would like to give by way of illustration some spiritual and moral values on which we should focus our attention. We should also explore methods for implementing them in our educational institutions. They should find a place in communicative and recreational media also.

1. School children and college students must be taught, with the help of ethical and aesthetic material, the fact that morality is the sum of the preservative instincts of a society and so it should be fostered and strengthened to the best of their capacity.
2. Those who come to educational institutions must be impressed through suggestion and example about the need of their conforming to the rules of life which demand direction of their desires and actions to each other's happiness, at all times and in every case.
3. Education must develop in the educand an intelligent respect for the past culture and achievements of the country, without opposing the new, and must enable him to appreciate and utilize properly the contributions of his ancestors.
4. The ability of the students to discern causes and relate them to effects must be increased so that they may not react to circumstances wrongly or act on false inferences.
5. Natural taste must be stimulated in them from early life to perform duties allotted to them without goading or surveillances and to refrain from appropriating more than each one's fair share of what rightfully belongs to all.
6. That each boy and girl should be given the fullest opportunity for the manifestation of the perfection latent in him or her is not merely political justice, social expediency and economic efficiency, but in accordance with the spiritual principles that would ensure a sound mind.
7. Students should be persuaded and prevented from behaving abnormally and encouraged to behave normally to abnormal circumstances so that equanimity in disposition may be cultivated gradually. Conformity here can be produced only through example, comradeship and discipline.
8. Recognition of spiritual values will be slow or impossible on the part of a person who has no love of punctuality, order, and regularity of habits, who is not prepared to rise equal to chosen and set tasks and who is not willing to labour with his whole might and skill for gaining perfection in every little work undertaken. He who is dependable, disinterested, calm, and completely free from bad manners alone can succeed in this respect.
9. Young men must learn to share with others knowledge as they gain it in a spirit of humility with the conviction that practical ability, character and intellectual powers are earned in the school of experience and are not just endowments.
10. Boys and girls must be encouraged to be profited by the best in all systems of thought and discipline and discouraged to

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submit to the opinions, ideas and modes of any particular party or sect and identify themselves with a part forgetting the whole.

11. Though prizes, certificates and decorations may continue in educational institutions, it is necessary to keep before the young continuously the ideal of work done in an impersonal spirit as against egoistic achievements. Further they should be taught that it is not the environment and situation in which the work is placed that makes it great or noble, but the actors' spirit and motive of action.

12. Corruption, fanaticism and misplaced enthusiasm are the opposite of spiritual values and they must be counteracted by honesty, reason and moderation.

13. Leadership of youths should be given due encouragement. But it should be watched carefully so that it may not degenerate into mere holding of power over others and exercise of authority. Leadership must be deemed always as an opportunity for sacrifice. So youths must be persuaded to eschew hysterical exaggeration and all kinds of sensationalism, if spiritual values are to be preserved. Examples of history, literature and social life must show what right leadership implies.

14. Young men should not wear 'egocentric glasses' and lose the objective attitude even to inanimate objects and events as personified enemies. Sense of inferiority and balancing need for recognition resulting from it would develop in them anti-social and unspiritual attitudes. Proper education must protect them from this.

15. All the above points will bear fruit only when right methods of evaluation and correction are introduced early in the educational process. A student who is never trained to discriminate or to be accurate in what he does, who is allowed to do hit-or-miss reading, who is never drilled to concentrate, and who has acquired only slipshod habits and bad manners from early childhood, cannot be made to see spiritual values even when they are before him.

Youths of India and the whole world need a living spirituality, not an otiose theology; they need tested spiritual principles and values which appeal to their imaginations and apply to the solution of problems of life, individual and collective. Religion that gives only lip-service and outer conformity is decaying to the root and from its manure must grow a new order of spiritual relationships that would integrate, revivify, and energize the emerging society. An uncorrupt youth is delighted by the mysteries of the starry sky, enraptured by the beauty of a gorgeous sunset, entranced by the mountain peak and shoreless seas, and enthralled by a marvellous natural spectacle. Such a mind would certainly feel reverence for spiritual and moral values, the beauty of which transcends that of all the rest.

The end and aim of all education, all training is to make the man grow. The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he can do anything and everything he likes; that personality put upon anything will make it work.

* *

We have to give the masses secular education. We have to follow the plan laid down by our ancestors, that is, to bring all the ideals slowly down among the masses. Raise them slowly up, raise them to equality. Impart even secular knowledge through religion. It will, of course, have gradually to be worked out. But if there are enough self-sacrificing young fellows it can be done to-morrow. It all depends on the zeal and self-sacrifice brought to the task.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE PRESENT SITUATION

SWAMI ADIDEVANANDA

[Swami Adidevananda is Head of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mangalore. In this article he deals with the present state of the Hindu society and calls for a rethinking of the problems that face it in the light of Swamiji's teachings. — *Ed.*]

'Religion and religion alone is the life of India, and when that goes India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kubera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Ever since India became free it is pulsating with life and activity everywhere. The five-year plans and other innumerable schemes to promote social progress and better standards of life are being executed. India has taken its place in the comity of nations to maintain international peace and security. After centuries of gloom and despair, the lethargy is disappearing and a new spirit is inspiring the common people. In the telling words of Swami Vivekananda 'the infinite giant is rising to her feet'. But all this new spirit and glorious vision of India's future will have no value if India forgets her fundamental character — that the goal of human history is not the creation of an earthly heaven but the realization of spiritual freedom beyond time and creation. 'The ultimate goal of all mankind, the aim and end of all religions, is but one — reunion with God,' says Swamiji, 'or, what amounts to the same, with the divinity which is in every man's true nature.'

Swami Vivekananda has pointedly drawn our attention to the fact that the life of spirit defies measurement by the material conditions and standards. A most powerful and prosperous nation may be spiritually bankrupt and that a country ground down by poverty and even political subjection may still be spiritually rich and unconquerable. That a conquered country like India could throw up a personality like Sri Ramakrishna is a definitive proof that the soul of India is alive like a burning flame.

Swamiji asserted in most emphatic language the basic principle of Vedanta : that all religions are nothing but different approaches to one and the same Reality and not toleration but positive acceptance of other religions and creeds is a natural consequence that follows from holding such a view. At the same time he pointed that every great religion has a background of myths and rituals which are not essential or vital as far as the core of religion is concerned. Myths, legends and rituals of each religion may differ from each other, but its core, the philisophy based on the practical spiritual experience, runs through all religions, like a thread through the pearls. But myths and rituals, if properly understood, add colour and vigour to the living faiths. Apart from their signification and symbolic value, they embody, as it were, the formless eternal truths. Mistaking the outer bark for the sap, or body for the soul, has been very often the cause for religious fanaticism. Swamiji was the first, in modern times, to interpret Vedanta divested of its mythological, sociological and ritualistic sheaths. Universal religion cannot be established by the eclectic method of selecting such doctrines that pleases one in every school, but by recognizing the common core of religions, namely, the philosophy based on the spiritual experience.

As everyone repeats, unity is the need of the hour. But how are we to establish unity in a country like India with its diverse races, creeds and customs? Free India has demonstrated that neither political methods nor linguistic integration of zones is sufficient to forge the true unity of India.

We have to learn that our country can be united only on the basis of common cultural and spiritual ideals. When Swamiji said that

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the first plank in the making of future Indians is religious unification he meant it in this internal sense : 'National union in India must be a gathering up of its scattered spiritual forces.' Unity is not possible on the basis of bellicose patriotism or jingoism. Swamiji has a definite solution to the question of the attitude of Hindus to non-Hindu religions. He never believed in external conversion or absorption. But he wanted a Hindu or a Christian or a Muslim to be a better Hindu or Christian or Muslim, representing all that is best in their respective religions. This awareness of higher values inherent in all the great religions of the world will go a long way in forging true organic unity. In response to the liberal outlook of Hinduism it is incumbent on the followers of Christianity and Islam not to insist on their rights of conversion. Forcible conversion has been one of the causes for the communal conflict in India. One can become a Hindu or Christian without changing his external garb. The leavening of Indian culture is a common property of everyone born in this land. The awareness of this fact alone is adequate for uniting all peoples in this subcontinent. As far as the Hindus are concerned they have a special responsibility : They must realize that a strong Hindu society can alone nourish the spiritual traditions of this land which can be traced back to the Vedic period.

During his wanderings through the length and breadth of India Swamiji's keen eyes had observed the customs and manners of various peoples at close quarters. It had enabled him to see life from different angles. The unifying notions he had absorbed at the feet of Sri Ramakrishna, the Prophet of the harmony of religions, were put into practice in his itineracy. He was discovering the inherent value of all the varied peoples and absorbing in his mind the religious and social ideas of each religion and every province. He realized that beneath all the diversity of customs and traditions was the unity of spiritual vision. To him the difference between a Hindu and a non-Hindu was only apparent. He discerned the intimate bond between the philosophy of Sūfism and Vedanta, of pure Christianity and Hinduism. So to Swamiji Hindus, Christians and Muslims were Indians first. In our present situation what India wants is this unitive vision of Swamiji and not superficial or mechanical synthesis based on some form of chauvinism. During his stay in the West he always taught universal principles which made a lasting impression upon those whom he met. Miss Margaret Noble, who later on became famous as Sister Nivedita, was struck with the breadth and depth of Swamiji's spiritual culture and philosophical outlook and was attracted to live intensely the life spiritual.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy was a pioneer in social reform. The Hindu society is grateful to him and others for the abolition of Sati and other harmful customs. Swamiji was not content with the type of social reform done before him ; he wanted it in a deeper sense. Neither widow-marriage nor divorce is important enough as a social reform. He never wanted to replace our harmful customs with equally bad outlandish customs ; for he knew the relative nature of social reform. What is beneficial to Western society may not be desirable to Hindu society. Before Swamiji, and even after him, the social reform smacked of imitation and cultural degradation. He asserted that cowardly imitation never makes for progress. Many social reformers then, as now, were ashamed of their culture and wanted to imitate the West. He reminded them in his inimitable way that an ass in a lion's skin never makes a lion, and that when one has begun to be ashamed of his ancestors, the end has come. He wanted us to remember that every man and nation must save themselves without looking to others for help. He laid down that the first qualification of a social reformer must be intense feeling of love and sympathy for the country and its people. He said that before flooding India with socialism and political ideas the spiritual ideals must be broadcast. He wanted a spiritual basis for all social upheavels. He warned us that if we attempt to give a secular image without spiritual ideas the attempt will fail in India. The secret of Mahatma Gandhi's hold

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on the Indian masses can be directly traced to this truth. The pace of social service in India from Swamiji's standpoint has been not only slow but also ineffective. It looks as if we have been pulling at the oars while the boat was still at anchor. Time has come to set right the defects in our social work, in the light of Swamiji's hints.

A tendency of the present times is to adjust or correlate the principles of Vedanta or Hinduism to scientific thought of the West. While it is necessary to adjust or reinterpret from time to time, social laws and customs to scientific thought, the same cannot be said about the truths of the spirit, which endure for all time requiring no modification at our hands. Śruti has come into the world as an impersonal revelation of Truth : it was given to us by seers as a doctrine of self-realization, not as a theoretical system. Vedanta is the 'Way' to be trodden in practice, not one more speculative system added to the old systems. 'The universe of the senses,' says Swamiji, 'is bounded on both sides by the illimitable, the unknowable and the unknown.' Though enquiries are possible within these bounds, spiritual ventures belong to the Supersensuous which is beyond all reasoning. Each age has its own scientific truths and political and social ideas which become obsolete in the succeeding era. There is no conflict between the spiritual world and empirical world since they deal with different levels of reality. The imperfect knowledge of one need not be the corrective of the other. Swamiji gives a rational interpretation of religion without trying to change the fabric of the Eternal. His interpretation which is in consonance with the truth of the Śrutis, experience and reason has a new value and application to this nuclear age.

Instead of rationalizing religion in the light of scientific thought, if the Hindus develop true spiritual culture it would not only strengthen them individually but also resuscitate their society. It is astonishing to see even the so-called educated people observe a form of static religion and morality without any sort of illumination. Swamiji had no sympathy with this type of religiosity and condemned it in no uncertain terms. Most of them are ignorant of even the basic principles of Hinduism. The children are not instructed even in the rudiments of their religion since their parents or teachers do not know anything. Even the priests are helpless because of their ignorance of the scriptures. Apathy and secularism of Hindu society as a whole is responsible for this condition. A beginning should be made to educate the priests on the proper lines and assure a proper place for them in the society. Swamiji wanted to introduce religious instruction in all schools and colleges. His cherished desire to found a Vedic college has not yet been fulfilled. Secularism which is eating into the vitals of the Hindu society can be thwarted when proper arrangements are made for the spiritual education of our boys and girls. The restlessness, frivolousness and indiscipline of our youth is nothing but the expression of a deep internal conflict which cannot be solved by ordinary negative methods.

Swamiji was very keen that Indians should learn from the West something of their organization, business-methods, science, technology and artifacts without sacrificing their spiritual culture. At the same time he warned them also that machines never made mankind happy and never would make. He wanted them to go out and broadcast to every nation under the sun the glory of spiritual life. Now, unfortunately, we have formed the habit of begging from others without contributing anything in return. The Westerners who come to India want to discover something of the soul of India and not merely see our industrial revolution. It is worth remembering what Swamiji said in this connection : 'The only condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is the conquest of the world by the Indian thought. This is the only conquest India has done in the past.'

Western achievement in science and technology, great as they are, have disillusioned the thinking people all over the world. The Western ideal to keep up luxury and high standard in life has not solved the problem, but on the

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contrary, has complicated their life. The evils of materialism cannot be conquered by materialism. The traders in death and destruction have become a menace to humanity. Speaking at Madras Swamiji said : 'The whole of the Western world is on a volcano which may burst tomorrow, go to pieces tomorrow.' How true has been the prophecy! Since then the volcano in the form of two world wars has erupted, and the third explosion, it is said, will leave no survivor. If human destiny has any purpose or significance it is not too late to heed Swamiji's advice.

The survey of the present situation will be incomplete if we do not refer to Swamiji's views on caste and socialism in the present context. Swamiji had seen for himself in his wanderings the tyranny of social system as far as the masses were concerned. The caste system, which originally depended on the basis of *guṇa* and *karma*, had now become hopelessly petrified on the basis of birth and heredity. He was convinced that the renaissance of India demanded the dissemination of spiritual culture among all classes and masses. As in the Satya Yuga when there was only one caste, the Brāhmaṇas, he wanted all the castes now also to return to the same condition. His solution was not to downgrade the higher castes, as it is done today, but to upgrade the so-called lower. He declared in emphatic terms that the superman of our ancestors was the Brāhmaṇa. He declared the Brāhmaṇa ideal as one in which worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. Though the caste system has become less rigid now, it cannot be said that the problem is satisfactorily solved. Strangely enough it has taken a different turn. The same persons who clamoured for the abolition of caste system want to perpetuate it now in order to secure power and pelf. They want to become permanently backward for the sake of worldly goods. While it is the duty of the upper castes to give up their arrogance and work hard to raise the masses by inculcating culture and knowledge in them, the masses also should rise to the occasion with a view to bettering themselves. Swamiji also suggested on many an occasion the spread of Sanskrit language among the masses as a potent means of uplift; for that language possesses the power to transmute anything into gold. Our educationists have not, unfortunately, thought of this linguistic weapon to ward off backwardness.

Swamiji during his wanderings in the West had come across Kropotkin and others and had a knowledge of socialism, communism and such other movements. Though these movements were still in an embryonic state he knew what was coming. Swamiji knew that the source of the power was in the people and accordingly proclaimed that the labour-classes would be the future ruling power. He had clearly analysed that the working classes who produce the wealth of the land are to be reckoned with and not the bourgeois. He even urged the privileged classes to work for the regeneration of the masses so that 'when they will awaken — and awaken one day they must — they also will not forget your good services to them and will remain grateful to you'.

Though the Swami stood for economic betterment and political freedom, he did not think that the panacea would be ushered by these *isms* alone; for economic socialism without cultural socialism degrades humanity. Swamiji envisaged a Satya Yuga in which diversity of capacity and occupation would remain without the ravages of privilege. If socialism is to be conceived in terms of material betterment alone, the society will be full of crude and violent people without the excellence of moral grandeur.

India must progress according to her own natural character. She can neither be Americanized nor Russianized. Swamiji was never tired of telling that India's backbone is spirituality, and no scheme of national regeneration can afford to ignore this fact. India must assimilate all that is best in different cultures and civilizations and weave her own pattern. Herein lies her salvation.

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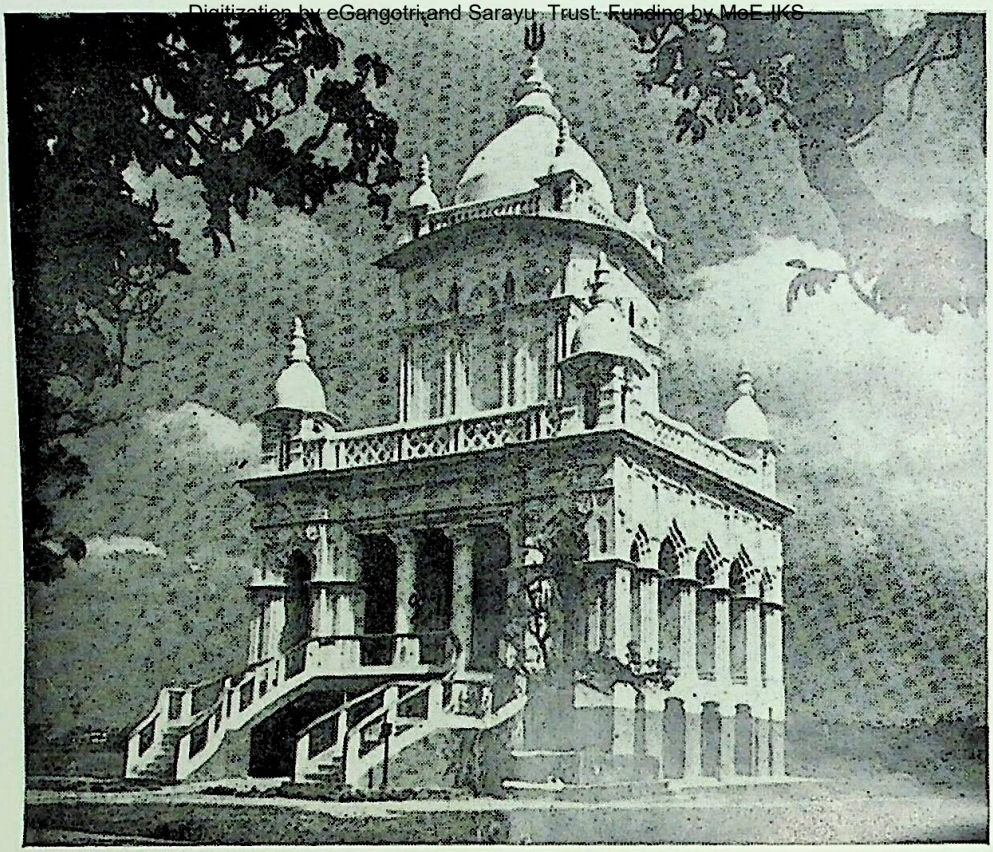
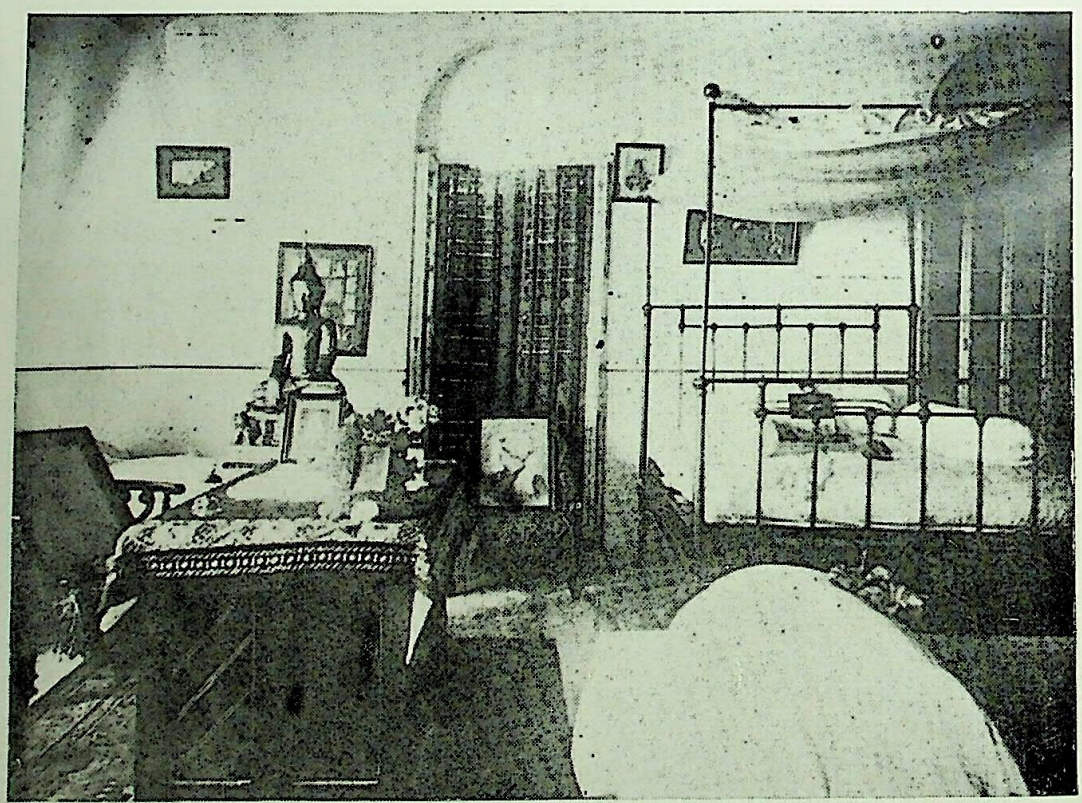


Swami Vivekananda's Temple at Belur Math on the sacred Ganga.



The room in Belur Math where Swami Vivekananda lived.

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FURTHER LIGHT ON SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S INSPIRED TALKS

SWAMI ATMAGHANANANDA

[Swami Atmaghanananda is of the Ramakrishna Order and is connected with the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center, New York. He has done a wonderful service to the readers of Swamiji's works in presenting the original notes of Swamiji's talks at the Thousand Island Park, as it was taken down at that time and by providing explanatory notes wherever necessary to make the original notes intelligible. — *Ed.*]

Among the papers which Miss Josephine MacLeod kept till her death was an ordinary writing pad (measuring about 5½ by 8½ inches) on the cover of which was written :

Notes From Talks by Swami Vivekankanda [*sic*]
copied for Miss McLeod [1]

The forty-nine pages of notes are a fragmentary record of what Swami Vivekananda said in his class talks at Thousand Island Park, New York, during July and the first week of August 1895. The manuscript is in the handwriting of a woman, perhaps past middle age, and appears to have been copied, word for word (including spelling mistakes), from an original set of notes made during Swamiji's talks by a new student not very familiar with Vedāntic terminology. Miss MacLeod, who did not attend the classes, said that the person who made our copy had not been present at Thousand Island Park. As to the original note-taker's identity, none of the list of known disciples who were present satisfies the necessary conditions, except possibly the hostess, Miss Dutcher herself.

Our manuscript may be divided into two unequal sections. In the eighteeen pages covering the entries from July 2 to July 10 occurs much matter not found in Miss S. Ellen Waldo's fuller record extending from June 19 to August 6, published as *Inspired Talks* in 1908. At the same time, the subject matter of each of these entries corresponds with that of the identical dates in this latter work. The remainder of our manuscript, consisting of thirty-one pages, contains scattered quotations from more than half the days from July 11 through August 6 (the last day Swamiji taught). Almost all of these are identical with the corresponding passages from *Inspired Talks*. Of primary interest here are several striking variants from the published text of his talks, undoubtedly derived from Miss Waldo's notes before they were edited for publication. From a close study of our manuscript it appears that the original note-taker began making his (or her) notes on July 2, and after July 10, when the record became more and more scattered and unsatisfactory, stopped making further notes and began copying from Miss Waldo's much more expert ones soon after they were taken down.

Part I of the present paper contains a faithful reproduction of the entries from July 2 through July 10, with a few explanatory footnotes. Editorial punctuation, comment, and emendation are enclosed in square brackets. The text of the remainder of the manuscript is omitted since it is so largely identical with *Inspired Talks*. Part II is an attempt to construct a fuller version of what Swamiji actually said in the class talks from July 2

[1] Swamiji's name was originally spelt "Viveankanda," and though a *k* was later inserted in the correct place, the wrongly placed one was left. Miss MacLeod's name is also misspelt.

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through July 12,[2] by combining complementary portions of our manuscript with the related text of *Inspired Talks*. The identifying page references are to the seventh edition, published in December 1955 by the Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras. The insertions in square brackets are new material from our manuscript; other editorial corrections and rewordings are not generally noted. Where there are two versions of the same sentence, Miss Waldo's has usually been preferred. At the end of Part II are added a few of the more significant variants found in the remainder of the manuscript.

This reconstruction does not claim to be authoritative, though in most instances the new paragraphs and scattered sentences fit well where they have been inserted into the correspondingly dated entries of *Inspired Talks*. It is offered in the hope of slightly illuminating the already existing text recorded by Miss Waldo.

I

Tuesday [,] July 2ed [*sic*], 1895

Thousand Island Park [,] N.Y.

Notes from talks by

Swami Viveankanda [*sic*]

I was born in one of our sects [.] The Shakta. The Mother Worshippers.
It represents the personal power. In India Mother is the sweetest word we know. There the father does all the punishing that is done.The Mother punishes never.

Mother [,] the Almighty [,] infinite power of love.

The cobra takes good care of her eggs, but as soon as the young begin to come out of the eggs, the mother eats them. The full fledged only get away and live. Ready made they come [,] ready for battle. The idea of Father God seems a lower idea. Mother [,] the first idea of power. Only when she (the Mother manifest whom dualists know as God) opens the door, we shall know ourselves. She [is] the kundilini [*sic*] [.] They believe that those who desire power [,] success, must worship God as Mother.
Bram m [*sic*] is without qualities [,] unknowable.
All manifestation of forces in the world is she.
Peace, life [,] intelligence, and she is person. you and me.

In the universe and not of it. Those married look upon every woman but wife as mother. but those who do not marry look upon all women as she.

She is what the world calls God. The absolute does not create or preserve anything [,] but in another form she does. The sea when calm represents the absolute, the sea in waves the power of the absolute [,] the mother [.]

The word Om means the absolute. The word God is not used in the absolute. The creator is mother.
God [,] nature and soul is the absolute divided into three.

The logos [,] the trinity.
Mother—the Unitarians [.]

[2] Though the last entry of first section is dated July 10, there are in it some quotations from the two days following (as ascertained by comparing them with *Inspired Talks*), and the dated entries for July 11 and 12 from the second section contain as well several variants worth noting.

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Father—Trinitarians [.]
The first step [,] mother,—she created
Father, son and holy ghost [.]
1st the trinity God [,]
beyond that the unity God [,] and beyond yet [*sic*] the absolute.
1st The personal you and I,
2 The personal you and I, yet one—
3 The absolute [,] not you nor I, the impersonal [.]
She (The mother) breathes and you and I are thrown out.
Thus the Shacktas [*sic*] believe [.]
The word mother is like an infinite ocean [.] Ocbud [,][3] the most absolute monarch of India [,] carried his mother on his shoulder[s] through the streets to show his regard for his mother. Men of special power have always been regardful of their mother. thereby taking to themselves a tiny bit of the great mother power.
Mother [,] she holds the power in the universe [.] maya [.] She is the kundilini [*sic*] [.] when she wakes up then can her children have or use power. The Shaktas believe that all success, all good works, all things come through worship of God as Mother. She is life in everything, manifesting as life. she is [a] person [,] in me and outside me. She is at once myself and all the power there is. She talks [.] she can make herself visible in any form at any time.

Worship the Father and you can get the results in a hundred years, if the mother [,] in five minutes. Energy is finale.[4]
Absolute is formless, but when this energy takes form it is called Mother. Water calm is the absolute [.]
When water is disturbed into waves, the moving[,] expressing power is Mother. she is called Time [,] Space, Causation. Om when absolute becomes Hrim when active.
Worship Mother and you will be able to do anything. Buddhas and Christs are little bits of her. She breathes and they all come forth., again [,] and draws them back to herself.
I was a Shakta in my last existence. I love them much. I know it brings great power.
The hardest thing in the world is sympathy with everything, identify onesself [*sic*] with all others in order to rightly understand them.

Wednesday [,] July 3rd [,] 1895

A dualist as a rule is less sympathetic than a monaist [*sic*]. They are tolerant to a certain extent, but being dualists see themselves separate from the universe. Protestants make too much of fleeing from wrath, negation and breaking down. Those who break or correct others['] faults are scarcely fit to build the temple. Thomas à Kempis did not talk against evil, though a great saint. The more holy we grow inside [,] the more holiness we see in the outside world. The more we accuse [,] the more we condem[n] ourselves.
What you see you are inside. He who conquers his own self conquers the whole world. Condemn or criticise none, it does no good.

Every step gained must be gained by love.
We are born dualists, which is good[.] but through love we learn that we are one. Why attribute veng[e]ance more than robbery to God? He is *all* love. Madness of love

[3] A phonetic rendering of Akbar, as Swami Vivekananda would have pronounced it.
[4] This is clearly a misreading by the copyist of the word "female" in the original.

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should be ours. Dualism[,] beginning and the end[,] must always remain. After a glimpse of the oneness, after *knowing* oneness[,] it objectifies itself to enjoy the pleasure. God separated Himself from Himself to love. I create God in my own image to be my master. He creates me. (Not the Persian king.)

God and I are very good friends. I live with Him, He with me, day and night. Sometimes I scold[5] Him, sometimes He scolds me. Love is the end and aim of the world. Throw yourself into the current[,] saying,—["]Thine, O Thine forever.["] Take, have eternal rest from all doubt, and fear. Why go to the temple[?] See God manifest wherever there is love. The cat for her kittens, look upon them, and then and *there* pray. Wherever love is, there God is. As soon as you say, "I go to seek Him,["] you deny Him, like putting your hands before your face.

Story of the pitcher of milk.

Once a great king was surrounded by many flattering courtiers. One man said to the king; [*sic*] "These men are only flattering you, I will tell you how to learn the truth of their regard for you." "Call them together and tell them you appreciate their deep love for you, and that you wish them to show it, in rather a singular way. A very large tank in a secluded part of your grounds, will be open during a dark night, and every friend of the king is requested to bring a large jug of milk, and pour unseen by any other person into the said tank.["] The king did as the man suggested.

The following morning the king went to the tank and found it filled with water.

Each courtier had thought his jug of water would mix with the milk of the others, and his deception would not be discovered.[6]

Thursday[,] July 4th[,] 1895

Which is the easiest way to know God? Through our own peculiar[,] particular nature. But do not limit yourself by saying; [*sic*] "Christ is all.["] The principle would be lost if all were in the one.

We make our own circumstances and strike off our own chains from our feet. We are the result of our own past[.] Then why not at once take the responcibility [*sic*] of your own past and be glad of the chance to suffer for your past errors, that you may thereby come nearer a true balance, the centre[?]

Cowards can never be saved.

The highest expression of love is unification, in illustration of which he quoted these lines;—

"I first saw him and he saw me[,]
There was a flash of eye from me to him
And from him to me.["]

There was a time when I was a woman and he was a man, then as love grew, I forgot that I was a woman and he was a man. Then farther I cannot see, but one. but I faintly remember a time when we were two, but love came between and fused us into one.

As the Catholic fetters the world by images &c, Protestants do by books. This book worship the greatest tyr[r]any in the world. The divinity of man is proven by his still living, standing, as it were, under the weight of an enormous cathedral on his head with

[5] Spelt in the manuscript "schold," and afterwards corrected. The same applies to the word "scolds" following.

[6] The story has the sound of a paraphrase rather than of Swami Vivekananda's own words.

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a *book* on top [of] the cathedral. It is better to start again like the M lsam [*sic*] burning the books, than live under such tyr[r]any.

Whatever induces freedom is moral and whatever induces bondage is immoral, and a sin : be not bound, come out of it.

So far as this world goes, man is all, if you see beyond, you go out of mind[.] All you understand you make into your world. Human life in its various forms is all the life you know. Even in this life they have conquered the heavens who have attained the sameness. Thus seeing the same Lord present in every being, He no longer kills Himself by Himself. Love is the law of life. Hatred is suicide. If I have not love I am nothing.

A young monk wrote about the age of 16[.] Sankara[.]
Matter and the external world is [*sic*] but the soul in a certain state, but there *is* only *One*. The world is God and is real[,] eternal[,] but that is *not the world we see*. We see silver in the mother of pearl where it is not. We see reality but distorted by the medium through which we see it.
Knowledge of the Absolute depends upon no book, or upon anything[.] it is absolute in itself ; no amount of study will give this knowledge. It is not theory, it is religion. ["]Cleanse the dust from the mirror[,] purify your own mind[,] and in a flash you know you are Brahman."[7]
God exists, not birth or death, nor pain nor misery.
We take the rope for the serpent, the error is *ours*.
We can only do good when we *love* the world [as] God, and he reflects our love.
Never approach *any*thing except as God, for if we do, we see bad, because we throw a veil of delusion over it, and then we see evil. Get free from these illusions. Freedom is to *lose all illusions*.
Our own realization is beyond the Vedas, because even they depend upon that. The highest Vedas is [*sic*] the philosophy of the Beyond.

Whatever I get or take from another for help to me, even if it be [from] a wife[,] but hinders my true development. I *must* help myself or I will never be helped, believe in myself or I will never be believed in.

Liberty is nothing more than destruction of ignorance ; and perfect destruction of ignorance can only come to us when we know God. *Realized reason is the proof*.

July 10th[,] 1895[,] T. I. Park —

The Veidas.[8]

Because God is *in* the perception of every being, — therefore he is capable of the realization of God. thereby do we KNOW God. If Brahmán (absolute) is in the perception of every being, what do we gain or lose by knowing this ? We don't necessarily gain *things*, but we gain *ourselves*.

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[7] The quotation mark may indicate either a scriptural quotation or Swami Vivekananda's exact words.

[8] Originally the word was spelt correctly as "Vedas" but later was altered thus.

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Knowledge can not be without previous knowledge, therefore knowledge has no begin[n]ing or end.

I cannot explain to you how the Absolute becomes the finite. It is true that the ego to see itself must objectify itself.

Love concentrates easily without much effort of the power of the will.[9]

Give yourself up to him (God) and never question.

In search of one to love I sacrifice myself to Thee, draw me to Thee.

Death being certain[,] it is best to give up life to a high purpose.

The moment you identify yourself with anything but God, misery begins with you.

My mind is the ego objectified, the myself objectified so that I can see I.

No one can say the way to liberty until he *is* liberty itself. He who follows the God of truth[,] to him the God of truth reveals himself.[10]

The Brahm [11] is he whom you can never drive out, even the insane man, or he who dreams, even while he dreams knows that he himself is back of the dreamer. If he thinks himself dead, the thinker stands back of that which died.

So long as you hold yourself separated even by a hair's brea[d]th from the Eternal your fear cannot go.[12]

The ancient Hindus were wonderful scholars, living encyclopedies [*sic*]—they say[:] "Knowledge in books, and money in other people[']s pockets is like no money and no knowledge at all." [13]

(To be continued)

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[9] The quotations from here to the end belong for the most part under July 11 and 12.
[10] This sentence occurs in *Inspired Talks* in the entry for July 8.
[11] The original incorrect spelling "Braham" has been thus corrected.
[12] Occurs in *Inspired Talks* in the entry for July 3.
[13] Occurs in *Inspired Talks* in the entry for July 9.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE BUILDING OF MODERN INDIA

SWAMI SATSWARUPANANDA

[Swami Satswarupananda, a great scholar both in Sanskrit and English, is a former Editor of *Prabuddha Bharata*. His learned article touches all points of the social and spiritual life of the country and Swamiji's contribution to them with a thoroughness that makes it interesting and needing deliberation. — *Ed.*]

No scheme for the building of modern India can be regarded as complete, or even comprehensive, if it leaves out some who do not belong to the so-called Hindu fold. And Swami Vivekananda, it appears, has not given us any such scheme wherein, Christians and Muslims, for example, could find an honourable place and work and die for this country of ours. It is an idea which is expressed in some small groups of people in India ; and, though felt with a sigh, it remains unexpressed in much larger groups. The criticism appears true if we do not or would not take the Swami's personality into account.

Let us see if the Swami was against Christ or Christianity. Anyone who has read his lecture, since published in the form of a brochure, on 'Christ the Messenger' would have known what great reverence he had for sweet Jesus. During his itineracy he carried four or five books with him and *Imitation of Christ* was one of them. And he had so great love for the book that he started translating it, a few chapters of which were published in the Bengali monthly, *Udbodhan*. Even in those days when there was a chorus of criticism against the Swami during his stay in U.S.A. from the interested Christian missionaries he counted quite a number of liberal missionaries as his friends. Against the calumnies that many Christian missionaries in our country heaped on Indian Culture and civilization he did speak some harsh words. But never was his criticism directed against the personality of Christ or the way of life advocated by him or preached by his apostles and saints. Had he done so he would have denied his *guru*, Sri Ramakrishna, whose mystic oneness with the Christ would then have been meaningless — he would not have been the true voice of his Guru, which we all believe him to be. To the last days of his life he retained his highest admiration for two personalities, those of Buddha and Christ.

In fact the Swami had no hatred for any faith or custom. He was of opinion that even those rites and customs which appear to be diabolical at present also served some purpose at one time and lifted up some groups of people. As such, he was of the opinion that, instead of heaping abuses on them we should have respect for and gratitude to them. If he had any hatred at all it was against one thing only, bigotry of all kinds. And he declared himself to be a crusader against it. Did he spare his Hindu religion or even India for whom he lived and died? He was merciless in his denunciation of bigotry wherever it was found or even lurked. How often did he take the novitiates in the Belur Math to task for their slightest leanings towards bigotry in matters social and religious!

Similar was his attitude towards the faith of the Prophet. He might be called a born Sūfī. He inherited his respect for Sūfīsm from his

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NOTE : At first the writer of this article started giving references from the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* in support of his views. They came to be so numerous that he felt that the attention of the reader was sure to be constantly distracted by the footnotes, and consequently omitted them all. His advice to the readers therefore is to kindly go through the small book *Swami Vivekananda on India and Her Problems* compiled by Swami Nirvedananda. The whole book is in the language of Swami Vivekananda arranged topically. At the end of the book references to the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* have been given.

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father, Viśwanāth Datta. He got it also from his spiritual father, Sri Ramakrishna. He was temperamentally more a Sūfī than a Vedantist, if one is to make a distinction between the two. For the orthodox Islam, here again minus its elements of bigotry, he cherished a high regard. Again and again he pointed out to his disciples the greatest characteristic of the Muslim society — its solidarity and brotherhood. He, no doubt, deplored the mixing up of politics with religion. But was he blind to its necessity at that time? His denunciations were always against this or that peccadillo, not against any personality or any custom as said before. One day during his itineracy he asked an old lady what her religion was, as a reply to that she said, 'By the grace of Allah I am a Muslim'. Hearing this the Swami's eyes glistened with tears of divine love. This would have been impossible if the Swami had cherished any sort of ill will against any sect or faith. There are innumerable instances in his life to prove his wide catholocity, nay, reverence for all ways of life sanctified by age.

How is it that he spoke so little about Indian Christians and Muslims? — This question remains to be answered. By reading the eight volumes of the Swami's complete works any unwary reader will conclude that he was a champion of the Hindu cause only — he did not represent integral India. He spoke volumes about the good points of Hindu religion and society, even going so far as supporting their arrant superstitions; whereas he kept mum over the details, good or bad, of Christian and Muslim religions and societies. This statement, though an exaggeration, contains some truth and needs an explanation for shallow readers of his books.

Swami Vivekananda really represented integral India from the pre-Vedic days to future millennia. He spoke very highly about the Dravidian culture, at a time when researches did not reveal anything great about the Dravids. He was eloquent about Akbar, Shah Jehan, about the Taj Mahal and Mughal painting and architecture as much as about Ashoka, Vikramāditya, the Surya temple of Konarak and the temples of the South, or about the Gothic architecture, Greecian sculpture, Romain painting, etc. And he denounced the hardheartedness, tyranny, social suppression of the masses in all societies, including his own Hindu society. He did not offer any constructive suggestion for the improvement of the Islamic and Christian society except in general terms, because he did not belong to these societies and his suggestions were bound to be misconstrued as undue interference in other's matters. He asked the Hindus to introduce the Western and Islamic social ideal, of valour (which was their Rama's and Krishna's), into their own ideal, of purity, to make their society perfect.

There was another important point in this connexion to note. For about one thousand years the Hindus had been hearing all kinds of criticism against their culture and civilization, their religion and society. Though now and then there arose outstanding intellectual personalities in the Hindu society their propaganda being but temporary outbursts and that too in high intellectual level, they did not reach the ignorant masses, who fell an easy prey to the continuous and systematic propaganda of the Missionaries of the above two faiths, backed as they were then by the political powers. By continuously hearing denunciations of their religion and society for such a long period of time, the Hindus were on the verge of losing faith in themselves and their culture, despite innumerable good points in them. In their desperate attempts to save themselves from these attacks there arose in the latter half of the ninteenth century a number of reformers, who, unfortunately, took to the very same method of hurling abuses at the old Hindu society, as a reaction to which bigoted reactionaries tried to take back the society to more ancient days with their hoary but meaningless customs and rites. As a result the old society got still more divided and confused. This was the condition of the Hindu society which constituted the overwhelming majority community of India. Can a country be integrated and put on the way

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VEDANTA AND VIVEKANANDA

SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI

[Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Chairman, Legislative Council, West Bengal, is an erudite scholar and master of several languages. His contact with the Ramakrishna Mission is long-standing. In this article he, almost with a personal touch, exquisitely depicts what Swamiji has done to man the individual, to India and humanity in general. — *Ed.*]

It is a matter of thankfulness and at the same time of great humility for us Indians of the present age that ever since the beginning of her history, it has been given to India to serve Humanity in various ways and to give of her best for the happiness and self-realization of man. India in the past has sought to fulfil her destiny in her own special way, and that was the way of introspection and understanding, of tolerance and acceptance, of peace and co-operation, and of love and service. From the time of the Vedas, which embody the oldest traditions of India about her strivings in the domains of the body, the mind and the spirit, there has been a succession of teachers and leaders, of sages, seers and saints, of men of science and men of thought as well as men of action, the sum total of whose achievements has built up the glory and the grandeur, the splendour and the wonder that is India. The gifts of the spirit rise above all other gifts. And although side by side with the great nations of antiquity and the middle ages, like the Egyptians and the Mesopotamians, the Greeks and the Romans, the Iranians and the Chinese, the Arabs and the Mongols, India has given to the world many things in the spheres of science and technology, of philosophy and letters, and of organization and action, her special contribution has been in the realm of thought and integration. Quite early, from the end of the Vedic period, and during the age of her Upaniṣads, India developed her *Weltanschauung* — her Way of Thought and her Way of Life — her attitude to the two worlds of the Seen and the Unseen. As soon as she realized herself, she brought before the world the Indian Way — *Indianism* or 'the Thought of India in Action', her proper *Dharma* or special character, her *Bhārata-Dharma*. This Indian Way, *Indianism*, or *Bhārata-Dharma*, is established on certain concepts and practices which have been arrived at by intellectual ratiocination as well as mystical intuition, and which have got a universal applicability transcending age, race and clime. India has been thrice blessed in being able, inspite of the vicissitudes of her fortune and her frequent fallings off from the ideal, to maintain the core of her *Bhārata-Dharma*, her Indianness, thanks to the line of great thinkers, teachers and social organizers.

Her Indianness, her *Bhārata-Dharma* or Indianism, according to the expert opinion of those who have devoted their lives in its study, lies in some basic concepts like the following: (1) The concept that there is but one Reality or Essence, which is both immanent and transcendent, within the entire universe, Seen and Unseen; (2) The individual self is a part of this Reality or Essence, and it is the goal of the individual to realize this; (3) Indian thought does not give any dogmatic opinion on the nature of this Essence or Reality, and allows the widest latitude of opinion according to man's intellectual or mystical powers of perception; and this leads to (4) a Great Sense of Tolerance and permits unbounded freedom of thought and worship, without any attempt to force a uniform view-point and practice for all and sundry; (5) This Essence or Reality can be arrived at by one or more than one or all of the following paths — those of *Jnana* or Knowledge, of *Bhakti* or Faith, of *Karma* or Action, and of *Yoga* or Self-

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discipline. On the social side, Indianism has, as the result of India's history with its commingling of races, developed the unique System of Caste and of the *āśramas* or stages in a man's life, and its peculiar rituals and cults, which are not considered to be hidebound and unchanging and inexorable. *Karma*, Individual Action and *Samsāra* or Transmigration, *Ahimsa* or non-Injury, the idea of *Puruṣartha* or *summum bonum* in life in which *Dharma* or Righteousness, *Artha* or Wealth, *Kāma* or Enjoyment and *Mokṣa* or the striving for Release from the bonds of life, have each its proper place.

This is the Indian Way of Life. Its greatness lies in its sense of the Essential Oneness of Being : the crux is Integration. The formulation of this basis is found in the Vedas and the Upaniṣads, and in the Bhagavad-Gītā of the Mahābhārata — comprising the Vedanta Philosophy of India. There is no system of thought or religion which does not have either a full faith or an undercurrent of belief in some Ultimate Reality behind life, with which the Vedanta spirit is in opposition. For the last 3000 years at least, Vedanta and its ramifications formed the core of Indian spiritual thought. Its value was discovered and demonstrated in India, and it has also been understood and appreciated by thinking spirits outside India. Ideas analogous to it, particularly about the all-comprehensive Oneness of the Reality, have been also arrived at by the finer spirits in many other lands and at different times. Among recent exponents in the West of this ideology which Vedanta has expressed so categorically and with so much conviction is Aldous Huxley, the English writer and thinker, who has formulated it as the *Perennial Philosophy*. But as said before, it has been in India, and in the lands within the orbit of Indian thought, that this great spirit of Understanding and Toleration with the background of an Essential Unity has been mainly operative. Particularly it was lost sight of in the lands of the West, where the myths of established and organized religion and assertions of dogmatic creeds held sway and clouded the atmosphere of free and untrammelled enquiry.

In India, too, we have occasionally lost sight of the basic traits of Indianism, of *Bhārata-Dharma*. Time and often there has been a necessity for great Teachers, men with the perception of the Essential Unity, the Ultimate Reality, and who are in our common parlance emanations or manifestations of Its light and power, to come and rekindle this sense of the Reality, and of man's essential unity with It. They came, and they gave this teaching each in his own way. The exigencies of the situation and the needs of the men and women of the times determined the language or the metaphor in which they spoke, the outer trappings of the core of truth which they sought to revive. We have thus in India, the *Rishis*, the *Jinas* and the *Buddhas*, the *Bhaktas* and the *Yogis*, the *Nāyanmars* and the *Āzhvars*, the *Sants* and the *Gurus*, as well as the Sufi *Pirs* and *Murshids* with scores of outstanding personalities. Other lands have had their teachers — Akhen-aten, Moses, Isaiah, Lao-tzu, Confucius, Mo-tzu, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Christ, Muhammad and the mediaeval saints and mystics of Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

God creates Himself over and over again, to establish and strengthen the true nature of things, the correct vision of life, whenever it is necessary for the good of man — so says the Gītā ; and through divine Providence, this happened in a remarkable way once again in India during the last century, when the twin personalities of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda came into being, and ushered in a renaissance in man's approach to the Reality. It was the old ideology of the saints and sages of India as in the Vedanta and of a number of kindred spirits in other countries.

Vivekananda came at a critical time when India and the World had need of him. Paramahamsa Ramakrishna drew out his dormant faculties—he roused the sleeping lion by giving him what his soul was hankering for most, the realization of the Supreme,—and at the same time impelling him to act in the

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service of a humanity which was suffering on the one hand (as in India) from social tyranny and from economic and spiritual exploitation, and on the other (as largely in the West) from having lost or obscured what may be called God-consciousness. His own struggles in the quest of the Reality, his contact with his *guru* Ramakrishna, his own experiences of the misery and helplessness of his people and his reaction to it all, which let loose all the pent-up energies of his mind and body to devote himself to their rehabilitation, firstly in the material, intellectual and moral planes and then in the spiritual, made him in a way the greatest leader of India in thought and action during the last hundred and fifty years.

When talking about Vivekananda, one can ask himself : What has Vivekananda done for me ? What has he done for my people ? and finally, what has he done for Humanity as a whole ?

What he has done for me is something intimate and personal, which can only be discussed on some more suitable occasion. But I can give my sincere testimony on one very vital matter for me. Vivekananda, along with Rabindranath, each in his own way and in his own sphere of work, has enabled me to know something of myself — what I am, and what I should try to be, in my physical, mental and spiritual being. It was they who drew me out of intellectual and spiritual inanity towards something positive, something significant and full of value, leading to a desire for understanding and a desire for action. It was their directing me to 'the Perennial Philosophy' that is Vedanta — the Upaniṣads and the Gītā as well as the Wisdom that is in the past achievements of India and the promise that is in her present strivings, that alone helped to establish some kind of mental and spiritual balance in the midst of doubt and despair, and hope and assurance. From my early teens, I was fortunate in reading and pondering over some of the great sayings and writings as well as achievements of Vivekananda, and they helped me in my moral and spiritual being as much as the poems and other writings of Rabindranath, and subsequently the special grace, that was my great good fortune to receive of personal contact with him for a long number of years from 1911 to his passing away in 1941, established me in my intellectual and aesthetic personality, by bringing in questionings and their resolution in an approach through beauty and a sense of the mystic, and in the perception of a universal humanity. Vivekananda and Rabindranath — they were as the life-giving Sun and Water in saving my personality from withering away.

What did Vivekananda do for his people ? The testimony is from the people themselves — from the spontaneous homage which men and women of all ranks and ideas are bringing to his memory all over the country. The first thing he did for us as a nation is that he roused us from our stupor, from the *tamas* or darkness of inertia and the occasionally suicidal self-complacency we were in. By his voice of a seer and a prophet he pointed out to us, once again after centuries, the validity for the modern age of a Hinduism based on the Vedanta, which could accept with hospitality all sincere endeavour to know the Reality and to lead the good life anywhere and at any time in the World ; and at the same time, he urged upon us, with his burning words, the fire of which often consumed our torpitude and inaction, to be up and doing and make atonement for the injustices done to our brother-man through the misunderstood application of a Philosophy which proclaimed that all men are divine. He was the first in recent years in the history of India to raise a passionate cry for justice being done to the suppressed masses in India, for otherwise we would be doomed ; and some of his great speeches and stirring remarks in this regard may be said to form one of the strong bases for the present endeavour in India for the uplift of the masses. From these opinions of his, and his actions, people have been tempted to think that he was more a practical philanthropist and a champion of the oppressed in society than a

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preacher of spiritual religion. But his spiritualism taught him that Service of Man and Service of God are but complementary to each other — they are the two sides of the same medal: *Karma* or Action in the shape of *Karuṇa* and *Maitri* — Universal Love and Good-doing, is but a corollary in this life of *Bhakti* or Faith and *Jnana* or Knowledge. Vivekananda did one great thing for us in all these ways, and particularly by vindicating the Indian Way of Thought and the Indian Attitude to Life in the comity of nations, and compelling attention to it: he put heart in us, and he restored to us our nerves which we were losing. As Sister Nivedita, his great disciple has pointed out, it was Vivekananda who persuaded his people that they no longer had the need to be only on the defensive in preserving their most cherished heritage of philosophy and religion. With the assurance derived from self-knowledge and a knowledge of the world around, the Hindus were to be strengthened into an ardent and a convinced aggressiveness and not to be merely passively apologetic — aggressive, not in a bad sense, but in the sense that a time had come to assert before the world the value of the things, their culture and religion, their thought and action stood for, as something which will benefit man everywhere. He wanted our young men and women to be serious in life, to cultivate courage and strength, and to develop 'muscles of iron, nerves of steel', and he succeeded in filling a number of ardent souls with a portion of his own enthusiasm and will-power, to carry on in a spirit of renunciation the work he started with, his Mission. He was a nationalist to the core of his heart, and at the same time an enlightened internationalist and universalist to whom man everywhere was a part of God. His spirit worked in the resurgence of the Nationalist Movement in India, the Movement for Independence which started with the Swadeshi Ideal and Programme, the First All-India National Upsurge which started a short while after his passing away. With his teaching, young men condemned to death for trying to free the country by violent means boldly mounted the scaffold, with verses from the Gītā on their lips. Those who did not approve of the path of violence were also actuated by the spirit of Vivekananda in welcoming all sorts of suffering in their work of rousing the spirit for service to the people and the country. This was not a mere sentimentalising play with ideas — a mere *bhāva-vilāsa*, as we say in Sanskrit. It brought in self-examination, and spirit of action, one of the results of which was the foundation of the Ramakrishna Mission, with its most significant work in the spheres of both service and rehabilitation of the people on the one hand, and intellectual and spiritual training on the other, which has been of such conspicuous service these 60 years and more in keeping India true to her soul and in helping to bring about an ideological integration of Humanity.

And this brings us to the third question which can be posed: What has Vivekananda done for Humanity? The reply of course will come from persons who have come in contact with Vivekananda, with his writings and with his work, which was taken up through the Ramakrishna Mission and Vedanta Centres by the Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order in different countries of Europe, America and Asia. There cannot be any doubt, as impartial and discriminating persons have agreed, that the participation of Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 ushered in quite a revolution in the religious thinking of an important section of persons of culture with the spirit of enquiry in matters relating to the spirit. Europe and America had made phenomenal progress in science and technology and in the arts and literature, but in the basic concepts relating to man and the Unseen Reality, except among a handful of the élite, people were mostly at the foot of the hill, satisfied with their myths and dogmas and narrow notions circumscribed by time and space as being the highest truth, non-conformity with which *ipso facto* condemned man to the wrath of an angry God. What Vivekananda

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brought was the sweet-reasonableness of Vedanta, that made man everywhere a member of a great fellowship in a quest for the Reality. In place of the arrogance and rejection based on ignorance and buttressed by vested interests, Vivekananda brought humility and understanding taking their stand on the broad basis of a universal humanism. The influence on the minds of soul-hungry seekers after truth was immediate and magical. For over half a century, the leaven of Vedanta has been at work, not only through the study of the Vedanta texts themselves, but also through the example of Vedanta in action as preached through the life of Ramakrishna and of Vivekananda and of his colleagues and successors. The exclusive intolerant attitude of the West to other religions and other forms of spiritual experience is changing, and their attitude to their own is undergoing a 'sea-change'. This is quite patent to anyone who has an occasion to look into the intellectual make-up of the modern cultured or educated man or woman of the West. Slowly and silently a change of mentality for a better understanding is noticeable.

This in itself would be looked upon as Vivekananda's greatest service to Humanity at large. Eloquent testimony has been paid to this great achievement of Vivekananda by a number of writers of the finest cultural attainment in America and in Europe. Witness, for example, the selections of essays and papers on *Vedanta for the Modern Man* and *Vedanta for the West*, and other works published from America and Europe. Vivekananda's influence has been on peoples of countries in Asia like Indonesia and Japan. The message of Vivekananda has just started to work in the mind of Japan, and there is great appreciation for Vivekananda's preaching of the Vedanta in a country which already possesses in its own language translations of the Upaniṣads, the Bhagavad-Gītā and the Brahmasūtras, besides from early times translations of and commentaries on some of the most abstruse Mahāyāna texts which present different facets of the Vedanta in independent ways.

Vivekananda in this way has made the name of his own land thrice blessed, by enabling her through her basic Indianism — her *Bhārata-Dharma*, to be of service to Humanity once again in its spiritual aspiration and endeavour. And for this, a grateful Humanity is joining India in showing honour to a Great Soul, who can very well be considered to be an embodiment of *Bhārata-Dharma*, as his Master Ramakrishna was, so to say, Vedanta incarnate. Vivekananda's is a light which is becoming more and more effulgent, reaching to the distant corners of the earth, a light enabling us to envisage Man as a part of the Divine, which will never be extinguished.

No doubt, the Vedanta says that each one must have his own path, but the path is not the goal. The worship of a God in heaven, and all these things, are not bad, but they are only steps towards the Truth, and not Truth itself. They are good and beautiful, and some wonderful ideas are there, but the Vedanta says at every point, 'My friend, Him whom you are worshipping as unknown, I worship as thee. He whom you are worshipping as unknown and are seeking for, throughout the universe has been with you all the time. You are living through Him, and He is the Eternal Witness of the Universe.'

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA — HIS UNIQUENESS

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

[Swami Nityabodhananda, a former Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari,* is now the Head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Geneva, Switzerland. He pictures here the uniqueness of Swamiji in giving out his message without 'pushing people to their extreme', and also explains as to how best we can celebrate the great Swami's centenary. — *Ed.*]

A culture or a people throws up a spiritual genius or a prophet and then, as these geniuses and their teachings are far in advance of their times, that culture or people finds it difficult to follow or integrate with their message. Greece, in the sixth century B.C. threw up Socrates. Though in a sense his message 'Know thyself' was contained in the Greek tradition that existed before Socrates, the rigour with which he applied his 'Socratic method' on the people frightened them and created hostility for him and the people who produced this genius condemned him to drink the poison-chalice. The Jews of Israel threw up Christ, but when the Jews found his teachings too revolutionary, they crucified him. The rulers of Israel, got frightened of his 'King of kings' idea, but would not have insisted on his death. But the Jews, his people insisted on his crucifixion.

It is a matter of history that the spirit of the prophets came out more gloriously after the people had perpetrated violence on them. The spirit of Socrates victoriously entered into history through Plato and Aristotle, Socrates' disciples and has come to stay till today. And the spirit of Christ became a world-religion, the religion of compassion and sympathy for evil, for the wrong-doers, which aspect of Christ frightened most his persecutors. It is evident that the prophets made the people contradict themselves. In producing these prophets the people were, as it were, signing a treaty to go according to their directives. And then the people revoke the terms of the treaty they signed. In other words, the past, present and future of the people were condensed in these prophets. When the prophets show the people a vision of the future for which they are not yet ready, they are frightened and they get rid of them. Is it not true to say that the prophets consciously pushed the people to an extreme, introduced a contradiction in the people's consciousness in order to see that the people transcended that contradiction by their own force? Indeed they did transcend. While a section of the Greeks condemned Socrates, the chosen or the elite took up and propagated his teaching and thus transcended the contradiction. While the Jews persecuted Jesus, the other races of the world took up his teaching and thus transcended the contradiction Christ introduced into the consciousness of the people of the world. In both cases the power of introducing contradictions in people's mind is not exhausted. It continues and shall continue till man lasts.

There are three phases to the genius of the prophets; devotion to the past of their culture, a true vision of the future and the ability and patience to guide the transition. It is not enough to have a vision of the future, but one must be patient with the transition. Those prophets who were persecuted were either impatient or shocking to the people when they spoke of the actual state of affairs and thus despaired of the transition. If a prophet is really devoted to the past and enthusiastic about the future he cannot be impatient when he guides the transition. For what is a transition if it is not the preparing of the past and the future and serving them for the present? A transition springs from the past and it eats into the future. A transition is not a fugitive phenomenon. In so far as we have always a past to which we look back for inspiration and a future to which we look with hope to build,

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a transition that translates the past and the future into the present is an eternal moving reality. In a sense we can say *we* are the transition, we who are between the past and the future. It is the sense of urgency to bring into actuality the best in what was and the best in 'the ought to be'. A leader who understands the transition in this light can never be impatient. He must temper his enthusiasm and idealism by a human understanding of what the people are capable of. Their 'ought to be', though it is 'something new' springs from what they are now. While in his heart of hearts the prophet understands their level, in his outward behaviour he affectionately whips them to go forward, just as a father does with the child. The father's anger or impatience with the child's *status quo* is an enacted drama. Inside himself he is full of sympathy with the child's actual state. His love enables him to keep up the two faces.

Vivekananda was (and is) the prophet of India's transition and herein lies his uniqueness, his greatness. He was proud of her past without being sentimental about it. He was sure of her future without being exalted. He was the past, the future and the transition and the transition was more living than the past and the future. It is glamorous to be the prophet of the future and to whip up popular enthusiasm. It is emotionally enriching and sometimes idle to be a devotee of the past. But it requires quite another genius to be the prophet of transition. There one has to be severe without being severe, one has to push ahead without seeming to push ahead. In other words, one has to take people forward without their being conscious of it. It must be an effortless move.

Yes, it must be an effortless move and that is why Vivekananda never spoke of revolution, but of evolution, not of a revival but of renaissance. For him all true growth must be natural, spontaneous, effortless. It should be from within and not forced. 'Ours is only to put the chemicals together, the result will follow', he used to say.

To speak of revolution during the transition is to lose faith in the people. Those prophets who introduced the element of contradiction in the people's consciousness — and this we say with all respect to them — were impatient of the transition. Their technique was different: they pushed the people to their extreme limits, forced them to see the ugliness of their interior and made them react violently which later on made them compensate for their conduct.

Vivekananda achieved the same result by another technique. He visualized in the transition the power to realize the *yoga-kshema* ideal, the attainment of what one has not (*yoga*) and security in what one has (*kshema*). When the Lord in the Gītā promises the devotee to accomplish for him the *yoga-kshema* it was to awaken him to a sense of his own responsibility. The *yoga-kshema* ideal is not a doctrine of dependence on the Lord, but a doctrine that demands man to realize the urgency of attaining what he has not at the same time maintaining what he has. In India's case Vivekananda saw that India's genius is capable of achieving what she has not, namely scientific and industrial progress, a better standard of life and better productive capacity, keeping all the time her spirituality intact and in graceful dynamism.

This is India's actual problem. India must industrialize, must work to increase her purchasing power, her productive capacity, her total out-put of food. Can she accomplish all that keeping her spirituality intact, without diminution? If Vivekananda were alive and if that question were put to him he would have certainly answered 'yes' and followed up with a condition 'If India keeps her fires at home, the fires of the spirit, burning.'

The nations of the West, those who are friends of India, and who had gone through the age of industrial development are alarmed when they see India getting ready to take her plunge among the machines. They cry out saying: 'There, you are going to lose all your spirituality through science and industry as we have lost'.

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If India conceived man simply as an industrial unit or simply as a social or political being, then India would have lost her feet in accepting to be industrialized. But India's concept of man is much more broad-based than all that. For India, man is a spiritual being first and last which means that he has an inherent suppleness and elasticity to adapt himself to changes keeping the essentials. The West is anguished today because the West's concept of man was narrow and rigid and not flexible. Man in the West is unique, but the whole thing hinges on how he is viewing and utilizing this uniqueness. If it is a flexible uniqueness it is spiritual and has no reasons to be broken by the impact of science. If it was spiritual it would have stood by him and not abandoned him in the state of disbelief in which the West finds itself today.

We already said that the uniqueness of Vivekananda was to have led his people in an effortless move by insisting that real growth is from within and not forced from outside. In a century which invested value on things by their capacity to change, it required real courage and insight to say, as Vivekananda did, that real greatness is not in change but in being. 'Be and make', this was how he condensed the whole of Vedanta for India and for the West. If life is taken as the unravelling or unfolding of the spirit, then growth is spontaneous, natural; and changes are phases of the unfolding spirit. This was Vivekananda's view. But if on the other hand one puts the finger of stress on change and not on the spirit that can unfold, then the aspect of being is lost sight of, the aspect of character is lost sight of. One cannot produce character by technique. So then, in an age which gave so much importance to change, to technique, it was capital that Vivekananda as the voice of India laid his finger of emphasis on 'Be and make'.

Vivekananda's move to break India's isolationism should be understood in the context of his fundamental message 'Be and make'. One cannot be what one is essentially, if one believes that isolationism is one's religion. That was what India believed in; she believed in her isolationism, in her 'holier-than-thou' attitude. Vivekananda cried halt to that attitude. He wanted that India should be in the centre of the world, not a proud centre but a smiling, sympathetic and loving mother who is eager to share her joys and sorrows with the nations of the world.

To assure that his ideas as the prophet of transition are carried through as efficaciously as possible he organized an order of monks and charged it with that high responsibility. He knew that monks alone can be uncompromising in regard to ideals and that monks alone can bring about a new creative awareness, a new dimension of spiritual freedom so essential to carry a civilization forward. Sri Śankarāchārya in a certain context remarks that monks and not the laity should be entrusted with the renaissance processes of a culture as they alone can be truly faithful to the tradition and uncompromising in the practice of ideals.

The ideas of all spiritual leaders evolve through time and practice. Vivekananda did not live long enough to see the evolution of his ideas. He left that legacy to us who follow his foot-path. The celebration of the centenary is a propitious moment to see within ourselves and also outside where we have been trying to work out his ideas, how far, to what extent we have been loyal to him and how far we have been original. For, Vivekananda wanted us to be original, to be unique. An originality, a uniqueness which his uniqueness has provoked in us, must have been his cherished dream and is a precious offering we can place at the altar of his memory, before his living presence that continues to energize India.

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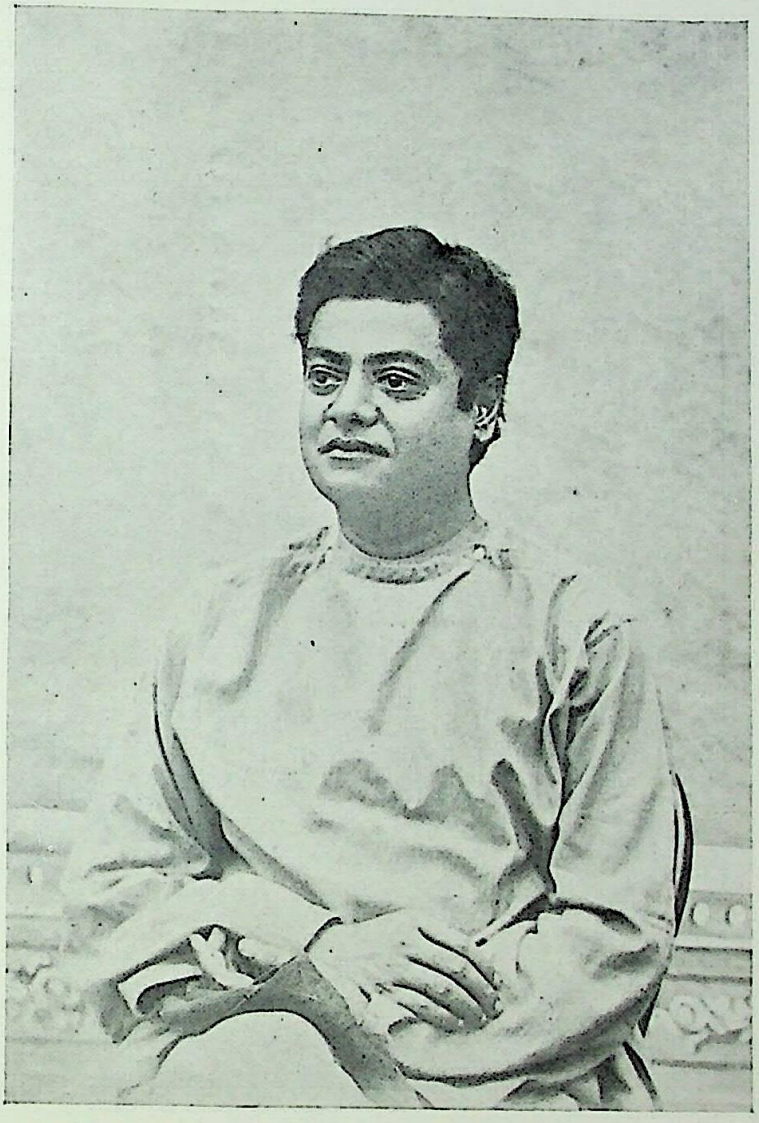

(CALCUTTA 1897)

'Believe in the infinite soul, the infinite power, which, with concensus of opinion, your books and sages preach. That Ātman which nothing can destroy, in It is infinite power only waiting to be called out.'

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(CALIFORNIA 1900)

'Vedanta teaches that you need not even go out of yourself to know the truth. ....Vedanta formulates, not universal brotherhood, but universal oneness. ....Immortality is knowing ourselves as one with all, living in all bodies, perceiving through all minds.'

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MYTHICAL RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHICAL FAITH

The Relevance of Vivekananda's Philosophy of Religion

CLARENCE SHUTE

[Dr Clarence Shute, Professor of Philosophy, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, U.S.A. had written to *the Vedanta Kesari* on a previous occasion, specially about his stay in India and the intimate experiences he had in this country in his article, 'The Unlimited Vision'. In the present article he beautifully portrays how Swami Vivekananda has helped by his life and teachings to wipe out the notion that 'Mythical Religion and Philosophical Faith' were contradictory and also to correlate them. Summing up he says 'Vivekananda is a beacon not for the West alone nor for the East alone but all men' who face the problem of understanding the relationship between the different faiths. — *Ed.*]

The debate which Rudolf Bultmann's essay 'New Testament and Mythology' touched off twenty years ago is of interest to philosophers no less than to theologians. His thesis was simple : the Christian New Testament assumes a mythical cosmology which is meaningless to the modern mind ; this world view hinders the understanding of its message ; the New Testament must therefore be interpreted existentially — that is, the mythical aspect must be displaced by a disclosure of the New Testament's understanding of human nature, man's need, and the redeeming act of God in the event of Jesus Christ.

The controversy which Bultmann inspired reveals a large area of agreement among the disputants. It is agreed that the perennial crisis in the understanding of Christianity has in recent decades become acute, centering in a complex of related questions which concern the nature of religion, the uniqueness of Christianity, and the nature of religious statements.

Our present subject has to do with one aspect of this general crisis of understanding — the tension between the mythical and the philosophical understanding of religion. Even when a mythical cosmology is sincerely abandoned, serious questions remain, two of which I shall discuss in this paper. The first relates to the possibility of translating myth into philosophical language. The second concerns the nature of a particular religion. Is it *wholly* mythical in character, or can we abstract from it certain doctrinal propositions which are either true or false ?

I have chosen to discuss the issue within the context of 'Swami Vivekananda's Impact on Western Philosophy'. Space and the limits of my historical knowledge prevent my attempting to display the Swami's extensive influence in the stimulation and direction of thought with respect to this question which was fundamental to his conception of universal religion. I shall confine my treatment to the clarification which the study of his works brought to my own thinking and in so doing I hope to suggest the inexhaustible wealth of light and inspiration to be found in his writings.

* * *

In a discussion of myth the first essential is to state the writer's conception of myth itself. The extensive researches of the past century have thrown much light on mythical thinking, but it cannot be said that a science of myth has come into being. After all historical researches, the nature of myth is still a question for philosophical interpretation and this is necessarily conditioned by a writer's general philosophical position and his experience of myth. Accordingly, what follows is my own philosophical witness, not the statement of 'assured results'.

It is illuminating to compare myth-making with other activities which are at once both

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responses to the world and modes of grasping the world. Sense-perception is the spontaneous ordering of events in space and time. Spontaneous, because it arises by nature, not as the result of reflection. And it is an ordering because our sense-perceptions arise *immediately* from the states of our body, not from the external events themselves. That what we actually see is an appearance only is clearly shown by looking into a mirror; we see the image behind the mirror, not at the location of the object which reflects the light rays which enter the eye. This case cannot be assimilated to the ordinary illusion, which vanishes after correction. The displacement of the mirror-image remains regardless of our knowledge of the illusion or our skill in operating with mirrors. A further feature of perception is that the space in which we locate images is a narrowly restricted one. We can get the realistic 'feel' of only a very limited area even when, as in regions of very high mountains, we have come to 'know' (as distinguished from 'perceive') that the distance is great.

Contrasted with this world of perceived objects in actually felt space is the world of objects thought about. We do, indeed, think about the objects which we have perceived; but strictly speaking, to the extent that our object is an object of *thought*, we have left the world of concrete realities for one of abstractions. By doing so we have immensely multiplied the objects of experience. The most obvious example is, again, space. We have exchanged the narrow limits of realistically felt space for the theoretically known structure of an unlimited space.

Now there are persons who believe that Nature is far richer both in itself and in its operation upon us than Nature as it appears in sense-perception and in theoretical understanding. Mystics, sacred and profane, have witnessed to their conviction that the highest realized state of being is an experience akin to perception in its intuitive immediacy but devoid of all sensory content. And it is important to note that mysticism as a type of experience is not restricted to its pure states in the relatively few mystics. Whitehead has argued that the excessive reliance on clear and distinct sense-perception as the basis for understanding the world has led to a completely false metaphysics. Sense-perception is, indeed, the 'appearance' of the present. Outside the bounds of such perception are the massive effects of Nature upon us which do not rise to the level of clear consciousness because they are the constant rather than variable conditions of our existence. I see in this theory of Whitehead a possible clue to the understanding of mysticism, although Whitehead himself, so far as I am aware, did not use it for this purpose. Whether in its pure states or as a factor in less intense experience, we have in mysticism a more direct grasp of reality because it is a state which is *immediately* caused by the pressure of Nature rather than *mediated* by the symbols of sense-perception.

Is there a form of thinking which is adapted to the articulation of these deeper levels of experience? That this is the distinct function of myth is a hypothesis worthy of exploration. Myth is not an attempt to describe the world of natural objects. When it is mistakenly thought to be such it is interpreted as a precursor to science, to be outgrown in the intellectual maturity of a culture. On the contrary, it is an expression of commerce between man and nature which is unique not only because its mode of thought differs from that of science but also because its subject matter is of a different order. It says what it has to say in words which evoke images common to the world of sense but it means something quite different — something which cannot be brought into focus because it does not pertain to the realm of objects but to the realm of subjects. It is describing neither the cosmos external to man nor anything supernatural. It is, rather, building a world the stuff of which lies unidentified in the depths of the human psyche until it is objectified in myth.

This is why genuine myth is not a deliberately contrived product of artistic genius. In a course of historical development it surges

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up from within numerous minds, each taking part in its making. With whatever pangs of however long travail, it does come to birth as a living child. It is an individual in its own right, it will live a life of its own, both inspiring and expressing the deepest experiences of countless persons. Its ideas and personalities cut loose from their original moorings and develop like a maturing organism within the experience of each person who takes it to be *his* myth.

With respect to the essential doctrines of Christian faith I have often argued that what happened nineteen centuries ago, in its nature as historical fact, cannot affect me in the present. Unless what happened there and then in some definite sense is happening here and now, the ancient event is irrelevant. I was once asked why, then, I was not content to let Christ join Isis, Osiris, and the other mythical gods and goddesses. I replied that Christ was free to join any company he chose; the question was whether or not he could take me with him. The fact is that Isis and Osiris are not mythical deities for *me* — they are figures in *records* of myth. The words which record a myth, however much they may be enjoyed as literature, are not an actual myth to one for whom they are not an articulation of man's confrontation and participation in a depth of reality which it is impossible to focus in conceptual thought.

I have referred to the view that myth is the precursor of science and is displaced by the latter when theoretical understanding becomes dominant. Actually, the temporal sequence of the origins of myth and science masks their relationship more than it illumines it. It may well be that myth is displaced by science, instead of living together with it, only when the objective, scientific mode of thought has obscured the meaning of subjectivity. Introspection is then taken to be the one mode of knowing the subjective. But introspection only examines inner states of consciousness which, as examined, are as static, as divorced from the distinctive thrust of subjectivity, as any other object. A knowledge of subjectivity may be had only by way of awareness of existing as a subject; and the only way in which the basic features of living subjectivity can be presented in their dynamism is in the spontaneous symbolism of myth.

* * *

I have spoken of the crisis of understanding which Christianity is passing through in the West. Strangely, however, there is an equal crisis in understanding the meaning of contemporary science. Martin Buber spoke of this in the course of his inaugural lectures as Professor of Social Philosophy at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1938.

> '. . . Einstein's concept of the universe signifies no fulfilment of the spirit's inkling, but the contradiction of all its inklings and imaginings: this universe can still be thought, but it can no longer be imaged, the man who thinks it no longer really lives in it. The generation which works modern cosmology into its natural thought will be the first, after several millennia of changing images of the universe, which will have to forego the possession of an image of its universe; this very fact, that it lives in a universe which cannot be imaged, will probably be its feeling of the universe, so to speak its image of the Universe . . .'[1]

Buber's meaning is not entirely clear. But at the very least he is saying that if and when the universe of contemporary science is assimilated in the natural thinking of men, if it still continues to be imaged it will be recognized that image and thought no longer correspond. But can anyone seriously doubt that men *will* continue to image the universe even if they are fully convinced that modern science invalidates the belief that image and conception can be harmonized? And if man continues to need an image of his universe when he knows that it cannot be imaged, it is quite reasonable that he continues to need the images of myth even though he knows that what he means by them can have no image. To forego the concepts of classical science would leave man thinking a universe in which

[1] Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man*, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, p. 133.

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he cannot 'live' as a human being. To forego the images of myth would leave most men similarly shut out from the living reality of the Spirit. We need not fear the first dissociation; men will continue to image the universe because these images are the natural and necessary reaction to our physical environment. But there is no corresponding necessity in the spiritual realm. Here a 'demythologizing' could be successful, to the impoverishment of man's existence.

* * *

The early years of Narendranath Datta (the later Swami Vivekananda) reveal two opposing tendencies, the tension between which made possible much of his, later, best contribution to thought. He had a deep religious nature; on the other hand he had an acute, skeptical mind which challenged both the dualism of Hindu traditional theism and the monism of Advaita Vedanta. The resolution of this conflict came through his association with Sri Ramakrishna. Vivekananda's thinking was transparent and boundlessly spontaneous, and the heat of his religious experience entirely transformed the structure and content of his thought. He came to move with ease and familiarity within and from one to the other of the two realms which I have called mythical religion and philosophical faith. He embraced Advaita Vedanta (after ridiculing it even after his first acquaintance with Sri Ramakrishna). Yet he wrote that

> 'Īśvara, the Personal God, is the highest manifestation of Absolute Reality, or, in other words, the highest possible reading of the Absolute by the human mind.'[2]

The point is that Vivekananda's philosophy of religion embraced two modes of experience (four in his own complete description) in a coherent view. Extrapolation of human thought leads to the Brahman without attributes, as it leads, in Western European thought, to the 'Encompassing' of Karl Jaspers. But the response of the bhakta is spontaneously articulated in anthropomorphic images. Vivekananda shows that this does not in the least imply that these figures are fictions. They are continuous with the fabric of human experience as a whole, which is the only reality accessible to us.

> 'True it is that we cannot have any idea of Brahman which is not anthropomorphic; but is it not equally true of everything we know? The greatest psychologist the world has ever known, Kapila, demonstrated ages ago that human consciousness is one of the elements in the make-up of all the objects of our perception and conception . . . And this unavoidable mixture is what we ordinarily think of as reality. Indeed it is, and ever will be, all of reality that it is possible for the human mind to know. Therefore to say that Īśvara is unreal because He is anthropomorphic is sheer nonsense.'[3]

This understanding of the distinct functions of myth and philosophy made it possible for Vivekananda to have a thoroughly intelligible and practicable view of universal religion, an ideal to which his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, was deeply devoted. In his 1896 New York address on 'The Ideal of a Universal Religion' he distinguished between the philosophical, mythical, and ritualistic aspects of religions. Universality was impossible to attain in any of the three. Indeed, such universality would be destructive, since the universe is based on 'unity in diversity'. On the positive side I understand his ideal to be a universal religion, the essence of which was an inclusiveness founded on two complementary principles: (*a*) the same truth can be expressed in different symbolisms; and (*b*) the same thing can be viewed in different perspectives, all of which are mutually coherent. Accordingly he did not for a moment countenance the ideal of a world-faith artificially formed by abstracting from all the philosophical, mythical, and ritualistic differences to reach a common core from which all living reality is necessarily lost.

* * *

[2] Swami Nikhilananda, *Vivekananda: The Yogas and Other Works*, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, 1953, p. 408.

[3] *ibid.*, p. 411.

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The answer to the question, 'Can myth be translated into philosophical language?' is clearly in the negative. Our discussion, however, does not lead to an equally clear answer to the second question: 'Is a particular religion *wholly* mythical in character, or can we abstract from it certain doctrinal propositions which are either true or false?'

Perhaps the phrasing of this question makes a satisfactory answer impossible. Since pure myth is a form of art, it is possible that we may get some light from a consideration of the nature of artistic creativity. Immanuel Kant was much concerned with this problem. He saw that many artistic creations lack the 'spirit' which distinguishes great art. He concluded that the 'genius' necessary to produce the latter was essentially the power to create 'aesthetic ideas'. He defines these as representations of the imagination which give rise to much thought, but to which no definite thought is adequate. They are the counterpart of *rational* ideas, which are concepts to which no perception or image can be adequate.

This seems to be precisely what we find in the myths of religion. The ideas they present differ from the rational ideas of science in that they both challenge and empower the reader to experience them in his own existence. The thoughts which they evoke are all inadequate to their expression; yet they are life-giving thoughts revealing depths of existence otherwise hidden. If the charge is made that such an interpretation of myth and mythical religion makes impossible a straightforward account of truth, the answer is that the history of religious controversy even in the context of one faith demonstrates that the truth accessible in myth is precisely of this nature: it is a *lived* truth, to which no set of propositions is adequate and which can therefore be expressed in manifold ways.

This is not to deny the legitimacy of the concept 'philosophical faith', which I borrow from Karl Jaspers. There are great differences between the philosophies of the Upaniṣads, Spinoza, and Jaspers, but among the similarities is agreement on the existential import of the most serious philosophical inquiry. That is, the motivation of these thinkers in their rational pursuit of ontology — the investigation of being — is not to reach an understanding for its own sake, but in order to participate in being to the fullest possible measure. With the writers of the Upaniṣads we have the clearest intrinsic evidence of the presence of inspiration which flows from immediate experience. And what is distinctive of this inspired thought is not the description of spiritual experience in personalistic terms but the striving to express an experience which transcends the particularizing which is inherent in personalism. It may be called 'faith' because of its existential rather than theoretical nature, and 'philosophical' because of its endeavour toward rational expression rather than mythical portrayal.

* * *

Finally I must consider the implications of my title: Are mythical religion and philosophical faith compatible, or does devotion to one exclude commitment to the other? Disregarding karma-yoga and raja-yoga, we find an austere distinction between the bhakta and the jñāni. The former finds his realization in the madness of love for the divine, and in this deep emotional devotion the personal imagery of myth is both natural and necessary. The jñāni, on the other hand, is called by Vivekananda a 'philosopher' or 'thinker' — but certainly one of a very peculiar kind.

> 'To say that God is the Father or Mother, the Creator of this universe, its Protector and Guide, is to him quite inadequate to express Him. To him, God is the Life of his life, the Soul of his soul. God is his own Self . . . All the mortal parts of him become pulverized by the weighty strokes of philosophy and are brushed away. What at last truly remains is God Himself.'[4]

This is Vivekananda's version of what I have called 'philosophical faith'. He distinguishes the four yogas and the types of men to whom they severally appeal, in harmony with the

[4] *ibid.*, p. 398.

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tradition of Vedanta. But it is apparent from history that they are not exclusive. Vivekananda himself was a master of all four yogas. And he was something in addition. As distinguished from the philosopher as jñāni he was also a great philosopher of religion. I mean by this that he could and did, on the basis of his experience in all the yogas, and from *within* them, appraise their relationships to each other and to the other living religions of the world. He was a living example of the possibility of being both devotee and philosopher.

As such he is a beacon not for the West alone nor the East alone but for all men who face one or both of two anxious problems : (*a*) how to understand the tension between mythical belief and philosophical inquiry, and (*b*) how to understand the relationship between the concrete historical religion to which one is devoted and other faiths. The key to their solution is in a penetrating understanding of religion. I know of no more concise, comprehensive and illuminating statement on the issue than the conclusion of Vivekananda's address cited above :

> 'By means of intellectual assent we may subscribe today to many foolish things, and change our minds altogether tomorrow. But true religion never changes. Religion is realization — not talk or doctrines or theories, however beautiful they may be. It is being and becoming — not hearing or acknowledging. It is the whole soul's becoming changed into what it believes. That is religion.' [5]

[5] *ibid.*, p. 399.

VIVEKANANDA: THE CHALLENGE TO THE WEST

C. T. K. CHARI

[Dr C. T. K. Chari, M.A., Ph.D., Chairman, Department of Philosophy and Psychology, Madras Christian College, Tambaram, Madras, has contributed articles to the *Vedanta Kesari* off and on. Here in a short but forceful article he shows how Swami Vivekananda presents a challenge to the West by asserting the basic unity of all religious truth. —*Ed.*]

Swami Vivekananda presents the greatest challenge to the West by boldly asserting that the unity of religious truth is to be attained at the highest mystical altitudes. Half a century and more of popularization of his teaching has not taken away the edge of the challenge. Scholars in the West still shrink from so naked a recognition of mystical unity. Some even suspect that it is the *lèse-majesté* of Indian religion. R. C. Zaehner, in his *Hindu and Muslim Mysticism*, endorses the verdict that India is the Great School of Mysticism : 'Indian religion is unique in that it makes mystical experience the very basis of religion.' In spite of this concession, Zaehner argues that it is quite misleading to talk of the mystical unity of all religious traditions. He suspects, for instance, that Ṣūfīsm is, for the most part, so radical a distortion of Islam that it constitutes a separate religion, 'Vedanta in Muslim dress'. He finds that Hindu mysticism differs from both the Christian and Muslim varieties by accepting the eternity of the soul as a fact of experience.

Zaehner is not alone in voicing such perplexities. A. C. Bouquet, in his study of comparative religion, seems quite anxious to explain away the mystical elements in Christianity, Islam and Judaism. According to him, the Christian mysticism which stems from the pseudo-Dionysius is not Christian at all ; it is Neo-Platonism. Ṣūfīsm is a 'foreign element' which has worked its way into Islam. The Jewish Zohar and Kabbala traditions belong to sources outside Judaism : Gnosticism, Neo-Platonism and Alexandrianism. F. R. Tennant,

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in his *Philosophical Theology*, brands an ineffable and indefinable mystical experience as a pseudo-cognition.

The critic of mysticism, after heaping his Pelion on Ossa, becomes uneasily aware that mysticism still eludes him. Tennant admits that there can be no refutation of mysticism which does not beg the very question at issue. If mystical insight, he says, is what its *defenders* claim to be (what else is there at stake ?), its whole *modus operandi* is inscrutable. Zaehner establishes not that *mysticism* varies but that its *interpretations* do, even in India. William James, with his eyes open to the wider vistas, affirmed brusquely the unanimity of mystical utterances. W. T. Stace and Arberry have recently reached not dissimilar conclusions.

Why is Vivekananda a challenge to all these scholars who have busied themselves with mysticism ? Nobody denounced mysticism in harsher language than he ; yet nobody exalted it more. He noticed the slipperiness and ambiguity of the term ' mysticism '. Does it mean ' nature mysticism ', or ' cosmic consciousness ', or, the ' occult ' traditions of Eliphas Levi ? The Swami said : ' We have become weak, and that is why occultism and mysticism come to us — these creepy things ; there may be great truths in them ; but they have nearly destroyed us.' (*Complete Works*, III, 7th impression, p. 224). In a letter (*Complete Works*, VIII, 2nd edition, p. 335) he went so far as to say that ' mystics as a class are not very favourable to me ' while admitting again that there may be some truth in the ' mass of mysticism ' which has burst on the West as a counter-blast to its scientism.

What does the indictment mean ? In *The Vedanta Kesari* for May 1955, I have discussed some quasi-mystical states which are being increasingly studied by psychologists, psychiatrists, psychoanalysts and neurologists : states induced by mescal and LSD-25, auto-hypnotic and allied states, ' depersonalizations ' of ' trance-mediums ', etc. Vivekananda maintained that these are cheap substitutes for genuine mysticism. He shrewdly anticipated the modern clinical discovery that there is a ' common core ' in all these experiences. The individual becomes dimly conscious of an immensity enveloping him. It is the first plunge into ' Spencer's Unknowable ', as Vivekananda described it with his inimitable touch of humour. One must, however, dive deeper to bring about profounder changes of personality.

The lower neurotic or psychotic involvement in mysticism may have its occasional therapeutic value. One of Flournoy's psychopathic subjects achieved a quasi-mysticism which comforted and strengthened her. There was an absolute certainty (*certitude absolue de la réalité du Divin*); ineffability or incommunicability (*Les mots ne sont pas faits pour décrire ce que j'ai éprouvé, ou subi, ou expériencé*); imperative character (*consciente d'une autre réalité essentielle et immuable*); and heightened personality (*c'était à la fois une immensité et une intimité*). Flournoy showed that the subject's ' interior vision ' (*une voix tout intérieure*) was composite and built up from the idealized image of the parent, the suggestions of strength she received from the therapist, the shining examples of virtue absorbed by reading religious literature ; and faith in Jesus. The ' presence ' could not be summoned at will and when it came, it was located generally on the *left* and accompanied by a sense of well-being. Present-day psychosomatic medicine points to the preponderance, in certain cases, of psychoneurotic pains on the *left* side associated with a primitive unconscious symbolism of magic and feeling.

Swami Vivekananda saw how quasi-mystical states lend themselves to inflated interpretations. ' Self-styled mystics ', he said, notice ' some little activity of their own and others' minds, and without knowing anything about the real character of such superficial manifestations, have published them as facts universal in their application.' (*Complete Works*, VI, 6th edition, p. 31). Silberer, in his *Problems of Mysticism and Its Symbolism*, pointed out how easy it is to confuse the mystic with the schizophrenic on the one hand and the self-

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seeking magician on the other. There are invisible lines of demarcation which are missed by a superficial psychology. The mystic cooperates with the infinite ; the magician rebels against it and tries to bend it to his selfish aims ; the schizophrenic crumbles under the weight of an intolerable experience. 'God is dead,' Nietzsche exclaimed collapsing under the weight of the eternal. Fire is often the mystical symbol of a consuming experience. Etchegoyen, in his *L'amour Divin*, dwelt on the extreme subtlety of the symbolism : '*Il en exprime les nuances les plus délicates et les effets les plus violents.*' ('It expresses the most delicate nuances and the most violent effects.')

We must go from the lower ranges of mystical experience to the higher by disciplines and processes which are hinted at in the obscure images of pilgrimage, romance and transmutation. Etchegoyen noticed the profundity of the symbol of the sea to which I have drawn attention in a previous issue of *The Vedanta Kesari*. '*Francisco de Ossuna . . . développe avec subtilité le symbole de la mer : "La mer de notre âme n'a qu'un port ; le salut".*' "*Francisco de Ossuna* . . . developed with subtlety the symbol of the sea : 'The sea of our soul has but one haven, salvation.'" In Attar's *Parliament of Birds*, the journey is an interior journey and it reaches its goal when the thirty birds (*Simurgh*) gaze at the Great *Simurgh* and find Him within. Vivekananda pointed out that religion suffers by being taught as a matter of pious opinion instead of as a plunge into deeper and deeper experiences. "There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth." (*Complete Works*, VI, 6th ed., p. 81).

Swami Vivekananda's great mission to the West was a confrontation and a challenge. In an age of intrepid scientific discovery and material expansion, he testified to the immensities within man. He spoke not as a scribe or amanuensis of his great Master but with a throbbing personal experience of the mystical deeps. His unquenchable spirit today nourishes the Ramakrishna movement all the world over. His challenge cannot be stifled or tamed.

In seeking to penetrate Swamiji's indifference to circumstance, one has to remember that it is based on a constant effort to find the ideal thinking-place. Each family, each hearthstone was appreciated by him, in the degree in which it provided that mental and emotional poise which makes the highest intellectual life possible. One of a party who visited Mont Saint Michael with him on Michaelmas Day 1900, and happened to stand next to him, looking at the dungeon-cages of mediaeval prisoners, was startled to hear him say, under his breath, 'What a wonderful place for meditation!' There are still some amongst those who entertained him in Chicago in 1893, who tell of the difficulty with which, on his first arrival in the West, he broke through the habit of falling constantly into absorption. He would enter a tram, and have to pay the fare for the whole length of the line, more than once in a single journey, perhaps, being too deeply engrossed in thought to know when he had reached his destination. As years went on, and these friends met him from time to time, they saw the gradual change to an attitude of apparent readiness and actuality. But such alteration were little more than surface-deep. Beneath, the will glowed with all its old fervour, the mind held itself ever on the brink of the universal.

—SISTER NIVEDITA.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE SCIENTIFIC IDEAL

J. M. G. FELL

[Dr J. M. G. Fell, Ph.D., who is Associate Professor in the Department of Mathematics, University of Washington, Seattle, U.S.A. is closely connected with the Ramakrishna Vedanta Center in Seattle. In his present interesting article he traces the conflict of science and religion in the mediaeval period and points out how timely and effective was Swamiji's appearance on the world-scene to defend the cause of religion, grounded on a scientific basis. — *Ed.*]

We of the Western world are immensely proud of our scientific achievements, and of the scientific spirit which made them possible. What intelligent youngster nowadays does not thrill to the vistas which science opens before us — space travel, instant communication, the conquest of disease and hunger, and all the other marvels of our technological age? Yet occasionally there appears among us a giant of the spirit, like Swami Vivekananda. In his presence we pause for a moment, our thoughts sobered; and we ask ourselves what all this means in terms of human character and human happiness. Swami Vivekananda himself was above all a builder of character, a moulder of strong, unselfish men and women. How did he himself look upon the scientific spirit and its meaning for human life? This is the question which we shall try to answer in this article.

It is of course almost impossible to do full justice to the thoughts of a mind as subtle and as universal as Swami Vivekananda's — a mind that was quite unafraid of contradictions, that could face all the opposing aspects of a problem, make them his own, and reconcile them. However, we do hope to grasp at least one vital strand of the Swami's thoughts on science and religion. We believe that he had a message of the utmost importance for scientific thinkers of today. In brief it is this: Understand the scientific ideal rightly, and you will find that it points the way directly to one of the genuine gateways into the spiritual ideal of religion. In this article we shall develop this theme in detail.

Swami Vivekananda came to the West at the time when, at least among the educated classes in the West, the scientific spirit had just completed its victory over the traditions of religious orthodoxy. Let us briefly review the nature of the scientific revolution in Western culture.

The mediaeval Church had enshrined the Christian spiritual tradition in an immense edifice of thought, the backbone of which was the philosophy of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. In this edifice, the salvation of man, centering around the Incarnation of God as Jesus Christ, was the purpose and final cause of all natural phenomena. Creatures and things came into existence, and events were set in motion, not by mere natural law indifferent to spiritual goals, but also by the direct intervention of a personal God (and also of a personal Satan). In this intimate universe, tailored to the destiny of man on this one all-important planet, created a mere six thousand years ago and soon to be annihilated, the intervention of the supernatural was everywhere apparent. Undoubtedly the very concrete mediaeval conception of God's relation to His universe was helpful to many pious and simple-hearted devotees. But, as Swami Vivekananda often pointed out, the sense of dependence on external supernatural beings in the long run gives rise to horrible weaknesses.

> 'The idea of supernatural beings may rouse to a certain extent the power of action in man, but it also brings spiritual decay. It brings dependence; it brings fear; it brings superstition. It degenerates into a horrible belief in the natural weakness of man.' (Preface to *Raja-Yoga*, Works, Vol. I, p. 122).

In mediaeval Europe these characteristic evils of dualistic religion were rampant. The

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grossest fanaticism was indulged in the name of religion. Fear of divine displeasure became translated into violence and cruelty directed against the supposed 'enemies' of God — witches, heretics, Jews, and those courageous souls who struck out along paths of thought not sanctioned by the Church. The worldly entanglements of the organized Churches, their need to maintain their authority and cohesion amid the seething social conditions of the day, also forced upon them the role of inquisitor and persecutor, enforcing a uniformity of belief and practice. Again, a natural corollary of the superstitious dualism of the times was a belief in the inherent weakness of man. "What is man but a worm, a weak, helpless thing?" — so ran the well-known hymn. Ignorant of natural law, tortured by the fear of divine punishment for sin now and in the hereafter, man had no recourse but the Church, the divinely appointed guardian of faith and morals. This was the general attitude of the Christianity of those times — a belief in the inherent weakness and dependence of man.

We all know how stoutly Swami Vivekananda fought against these ideas of weakness and dependence. Here are two examples of his eloquent expressions on the subject :

> 'I am to worship therefore none but my own Self . . . To whom shall I go for help? Who can help me, the Infinite Being of the universe? These are foolish dreams, hallucination. Who ever helped anyone? None. Whenever you see a weak man, a dualist, weeping and wailing for help from somewhere above the skies, it is because he does not know that the skies are also in him. He wants help from the skies, and the help comes. We see that it comes; but it comes from within himself, and he mistakes it as coming from without.' ('The Atman,' Works, Vol. II, p. 250).

> 'Freedom is the first condition of growth. What you do not make free will never grow. The idea that you can make others grow, and help their growth, that you can direct and guide them, always retaining for yourself the freedom of the teacher, is nonsense, a dangerous lie, which has retarded the growth of millions and millions of human beings in this world. Let men have the light of liberty. That is the only condition of growth.' ('Maya and the Evolution of the Concept of God', Works, Vol. II, p. 115).

That deviations from the orthodox path in matters of spiritual practice and belief were not tolerated under such conditions is understandable. What is rather more strange is the inflexibility with which mediaeval Christendom insisted on certain primitive doctrines (supposedly maintained in the Bible) about the nature of the physical world. Here it made a tragic blunder. In failing to distinguish between the spiritual core and the inessential outer garments of the Christian tradition, and in insisting on blind obedience to the literal text of Scripture in matters belonging to the domain of science, the Church alienated from its fold ever increasing numbers of thoughtful people. If its teachings were wrong in the physical domain where they could be tested, might not the whole structure of theology be a baseless superstition? Thus in the last two or three hundred years it has become increasingly hard for educated people to find and grasp that spiritual sustenance which the organized Christian churches, in spite of their weaknesses, undoubtedly still have to offer.

Two of the most glaring and fiercely debated conflicts between science and theology have been over the Copernican astronomy and over the theory of evolution. The mediaeval theologians of the Church had worked out an elaborate picture of the cosmos, immortalized in Dante's great poem "The Divine Comedy". The earth was placed immovably at the center of the universe, with the heavenly bodies rotating around it in cycles upon cycles. Indeed, do not our own eyes see their motion? And does not Scripture assert the same, when it relates how Joshua commanded the sun — not the earth — to stand still (*The Book of Joshua*, Chap. 10, v. 13)? When Galileo, following Copernicus, proclaimed that the earth is not only not immovable, but has a double motion, about its own axis and about the sun, the reaction was immediate. He was denounced as a dangerous innovator, whose doctrines would upset the Church's settled view of the world — which after all was quite sufficient

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for salvation! — and thereby promote confusion and even atheism. He was compelled under threat of torture to recant his own scientific conclusions; and the authority of the Church was successful for many years in preventing his ideas from gaining currency in the universities of Europe. The Church's triumph over Copernicus and Galileo in their lifetime was, it might have seemed then, complete. But the greater its triumph then, the greater and more humiliating was its subsequent retreat, as over the centuries proof upon proof was found for the correctness of the Copernican view.

The battle over the theory of evolution and the origin of man came considerably later, but was an even severer blow to orthodox theology. According to the account in Genesis, God created the universe out of nothing in six days, along with man and all species of living things as they now exist. The date generally accepted on the basis of Biblical chronology for this momentous occurrence was 4004 B.C. The first man and woman were created sinless and deathless. They lived happily in the garden of Eden, experiencing nature only as a benign supplier of their needs. Sin, death, and the destructive aspects of nature — earthquakes, floods, the preying of one beast upon another — these made their appearance only after the Fall, the primaeval disobedience of Adam and Eve, when they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. In the nineteenth century, however, the discoveries of astronomy, geology, and evolutionary biology had made a literal acceptance of this myth impossible to any thinking person. This planet has been in existence not for six thousand years but for hundreds of millions of years. Likewise, animals have preyed upon one another, and perished in earthquakes and floods, for many millions of years. Man himself lived on earth long before the date allotted to his creation, having ascended through hundreds of thousands of years out of a fluid series of lower forms. Confronted with this vast evolutionary panorama, devoid of any primaeval Eden or of any Fall, it is no wonder that many theologians protested that, with the Fall of man, the Redemption too had lost its meaning. It is well-known how bitterly theology fought against the evolutionary view. But visible evidence could not long be denied. And orthodox theology was again forced to retreat, leaving the field to science.

By the end of the nineteenth century the battle of science against religious conservatism had been won on a host of fronts. Ecclesiastical authoritarianism had been discredited in most educated minds. Man had recovered faith in himself. To gain new knowledge and insight he did not need to depend on the old books, the old authorities. Within himself was the capacity to pry into Nature's secrets and to improve his life. Henceforth religion itself would seek to be certified by science rather than *vice versa*. But inevitably, along with the old superstitions, much of real value had also been discredited. Under the blows of scientific criticism Western man had lost much of his sense of spiritual reality. Thus an acute problem arose. Was religion to be relegated entirely to the status of a quaint myth, or at best preserved as an ethical moderator in society? Or could man aspire to the knowledge of a spiritual reality based on foundations more solid and dynamic than the discarded dogmas? Could human experience and reason lead to spiritual knowledge? This was the urgent question facing Western man when Swami Vivekananda appeared on the scene.

Swami Vivekananda seized upon the scientific victory as an essentially healthy thing. It is a degradation of man's nature to believe in God because of compulsions from outside in the shape of authority, tradition, or habit. We ourselves are divine; and the only true knowledge of divinity is that which comes to us from our own experience and realization. The so-called knowledge of God that comes from outside is not knowledge at all; to be content with that is a sign of weakness and degeneracy. Indeed, the sincere atheist is better off than the man who calls himself religious and is

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content to rely on church dogmas for his knowledge of God. The man-centered attitude fostered by science might at times be misdirected, but it was not fundamentally wrong. Behind it lay the great truth : 'You yourself are the Being that you seek!' We find many passages in Swamiji's works inculcating faith in oneself, reliance on reason, and freedom from dependence on outside help and authority, whether natural or supernatural.

> 'The Vedanta teaches men to have faith in themselves first. As certain religions of the world say that a man who does not believe in a personal God outside of himself is an atheist, so the Vedanta says, a man who does not believe in himself is an atheist. Not believing in the glory of our own soul is what the Vedanta calls atheism. . . . All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark.' ('Practical Vedanta,' Part I, Works, Vol. II, pp. 292, 293).
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> 'Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason, through which every other science justifies itself? . . . In my opinion this must be so. . . . If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. . . . All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation.' ('Reason and Religion,' Works, Vol. I, p. 366).
>
> 'Why was reason given us if we have to believe? Is it not tremendously blasphemous to believe against reason? What right have we not to use the greatest gift that God has given us? I am sure God will pardon a man who will use his reason and cannot believe, rather than a man who believes blindly instead of using the faculties He has given him. . . . We must reason; and when reason proves to us the truth of these prophets and great men about whom the ancient books speak in every country, we shall believe in them. We shall believe in them when we see such prophets among ourselves. We shall then find that they were not peculiar men, but only illustrations of certain principles. They worked, and that principle expressed itself naturally, and we shall have to work to express that principle in us.' ('Religion: Its Methods and Purpose,' Works, Vol. VI, pp. 12, 13).

This then is the first great lesson inculcated by the scientific ideal — self-confidence, freedom, man's innate power and right to find truth and improve his lot by himself. There is a curious parallel between the impact of science and the old Hindu myth of Indra and Virochana. Indra, the king of the gods, and Virochana, the king of the demons, went to a great sage to learn the truth about the Atman, the Self. After long years of preparatory self-discipline they were told : 'You yourself are the Being that you seek. There is nothing higher than your own Self!' Virochana, equating the Self with the body, returned to his demon-followers and taught them that there was nothing higher than their physical bodies. Therefore, instead of bowing down to supposed higher beings, they should devote their whole energy to cultivating their physical well-being. Likewise, the first response of Western man to his newly-acquired power and self-confidence has been the response of Virochana. We have gone mad after creature comforts. We have thrown overboard the sense of dependence on higher beings, and through our technology we are worshipping the body as the Self.

But the response of Virochana — which we might describe as the response of the rajasic element in man to the teaching of the Self — was not totally wrong. When a nation or individual is dominated by tamas — inertia and fear — it needs to develop something of the self-confident Virochana-nature. Speaking especially of his own countrymen, Swami Vivekananda said :

> 'So my idea is first to make the people active by developing their rajas, and thus make them fit for the struggle for existence. With no strength in the body, no enthusiasm at heart, and no originality in the brain, what will they do — these lumps of dead matter! . . . Preach this message of fearlessness to all, from the Brahmin to the Chandala. Tell each and all that infinite power resides within them, that they are sharers of immortal Bliss. Thus rouse up the rajas within them — make them fit for the struggle for existence, and then speak to them about salvation. First make the people of the country stand on their legs by rousing their inner power, first let them learn to have good food and clothes and plenty of enjoyment — then tell them how to be free

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from the bondage of enjoyment.' ('Conversations and Dialogues,' Works, Vol. VII, pp. 179, 180).

But the reaction of Virochana is not the end of our fable. Indra, the king of the gods, thought at first like Virochana that by the Self was meant the body. But being of a more thoughtful and meditative disposition, he was not satisfied. This limited, corruptible body, he thought, cannot be the reality we are seeking. So he returned to his teacher for further instruction. What is that Self within us which we are seeking? So the teacher taught him a deeper truth : It is the Self, certainly, which we are to seek — not a being outside of us — but it is not the visible self, not the self as we ordinarily feel and know it. Through years of further hard self-discipline and introspection Indra was shown how to dive deeper than the physical self, how to pierce through the multiform layers of what *apparently* is, and reach down to that which *really* is. Thus he eventually realized the glory of his own true divine Self — beyond the body and beyond even the mind.

Indra of the fable represents the meditative spiritual type of man, who is not particularly concerned with physical power and comfort, who wants to find the reality behind the changing appearances. What is his response to the challenge of the scientific ideal? Will science undermine his spiritual urge? Or can it show him a valid path to the kind of truth which he is seeking? Is there a religion for him which will be in harmony with the scientific ideal? Swami Vivekananda believed that there was. It is a mistake to think that science caters only to the material ambitions of man. It was no trivial coincidence that the victory of science in the West was achieved just before Swamiji's appearance. The one helped to prepare the way for the other. We hold that *the methods and ideals of science, when rightly understood and generalized, point the way directly to the methods and ideals of raja-yoga.* True, the pursuit of science is by no means the same thing as the pursuit of religion. We have to go beyond the scientific method as it is practised today before we can arrive at true religion. But this should be no surprise even to the scientist. For the scientific ideal, consistently followed, itself points beyond the scientific practice of today. It even gives hints, as we shall soon see, concerning the method which is to be followed in order to uncover the true nature of the Self of man — hints which are heartily in accord with the method elaborated in the ancient yoga treatise of Patanjali.

The kinship of the scientific spirit with the philosophy and practice of raja-yoga has two aspects. First there is a kinship of methods. In the second section of this article we shall find striking parallels between the methods and techniques employed by science on the one hand and by raja-yoga on the other. Secondly, there is a similarity of the results obtained. There are remarkable general resemblances between the Sankhya philosophy on the one hand (which embodies the results of the practice of yoga) and some of the results of science on the other. These we shall mention briefly in the third and last section of this article.

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'Science and religion,' said Swamiji once, 'are both attempts to help us out of bondage,' (*Inspired Talks*, Works, Vol. VII, p. 101). How does science do this? It is a matter of our common experience that each of us carries within himself a massive array of preconceptions and ill-founded ideas to which he clings, and which are constantly hindering his efforts to gain understanding and new knowledge. In fact, any deep new insight into any field of study requires not merely that we enlarge our existing stock of information, but that we *unlearn* a great deal of what (perhaps unconsciously) we thought we knew before. Thus, to grasp Einstein's theory of relativity we must actively give up our customary unanalyzed notions of space and time. To master the quantum theory we have to give up the deep-rooted idea that an object can be observed without the observation affecting the object. When a new idea of genius arises in any field, it is apt to seem at first absurd and impossible

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because it contradicts some habit of thought which is so familiar and deeply ingrained in us that we cannot imagine any alternative to it. But familiarity is one thing, and logical necessity is another. The deep discoveries in science take place when someone questions a habit of thought which had not been questioned before; when he finds out that, though seemingly inescapably dictated by experience, the particular thought-pattern is not actually inescapable, but merely one of several logically permissible alternatives.

In mathematics there is a method of analysis expressly designed to help liberate the mind from what is merely familiar, but not logically necessary. This is the so-called axiomatic method. The finest illustration of the intellectual importance of this method is the discovery of non-Euclidian geometry. In Euclid's Elements, the compendium of ancient Greek mathematics, the whole body of geometrical propositions is reduced to a few basic propositions, called axioms, from which all the rest are deduced by pure logic. These axioms seem to have been regarded up to about a hundred and thirty years ago as indubitable, certified by intuition but not provable on the basis of anything yet more fundamental. Then came the discovery (about 1830, almost simultaneously by Gauss, Lobachevsky, and Bolyai) that in fact these axioms were arbitrary. They were neither unique nor inescapable. On replacing them by different axioms one obtained new systems of geometry, just as logical, self-consistent, and complete as Euclid's system, but far less familiar! It is an amazing fact that, in the light of Einstein's general theory of relativity, the new non-Euclidean geometries appear to describe 'real' physical space more accurately over vast distances than the familiar geometry of Euclid. Such is the practical impact of the thoughts of 'impractical dreamers'!

The exact sciences, too, are compelled to try to liberate themselves from 'the bondage of the familiar'. Ideas and concepts such as time, space, energy, particle, and so forth, tend to be applied indiscriminately in situations far removed from the area in which these concepts can be measured and their applicability directly verified. To counteract this tendency to unjustified extrapolation, the philosophy known as 'operationalism' has been developed. This asserts that the meaning of any concept lies solely in the operations by which that concept is linked with actual observation and experiment. Thus, according to this view, the concept of time (for example) has content only insofar as it refers to actual readings of clocks or other physical devices by which what we normally call 'time' is measured. This attitude would be hard, if not impossible, to adopt consistently throughout all scientific work; indeed, it would not even be desirable to try to do so, since too much emphasis on criticism stifles the creative impulse. The 'operational' attitude has value merely as a safeguard. It keeps us close to 'the solid ground of nature', by warning us that concepts, however natural and familiar, cannot necessarily be extrapolated outside the realm of experience in which they have actually been verified.

This then is one of the guiding principles of science: Things need not be what they seem. Do not take ideas for granted merely because they are familiar, or because they appear to be inescapably dictated by your limited range of experience. Find out by careful analysis which of the ideas you hold are arbitrary; and be prepared to discard them if new insights demand it. We may express this principle in a slightly different way. No scientific concept is absolute. Each has validity only under certain preconditions. Alter the preconditions, and the concept may well lose its validity, and need to be profoundly modified. It is the task of science constantly to ferret out the preconditions of its concepts and laws. In doing so, in delimiting the sphere of validity of each one, it finds that each law is a special case, valid under particular conditions, of a more general law; and the latter in turn is found to be a special case of a yet more general law. Thus science progresses, discovering and formulating laws

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and concepts of ever increasing generality and pervasiveness. Each step is in some sense an approximation to the succeeding one. At each step some limitation or arbitrary assumption, inherent but unrecognized in the preceding stage, must be discarded before we can pass on to the succeeding stage. We are reminded of Swamiji's words, spoken in a somewhat different connection :

> '"This world has no existence." What is meant by that? It means that it has no absolute existence. It exists only in relation to my mind, to your mind, and to the mind of everyone else. We see this world with the five senses, but if we had another sense we would see in it something more. If we had yet another sense it would appear as something still different. It has therefore no real existence; it has no unchangeable, immovable, infinite existence. Nor can it be called non-existence, seeing that it exists and we have to work in and through it. It is a mixture of existence and non-existence.' ('Maya and Illusion', Works, Vol. II, p. 91).

As Swami Vivekananda indicates in the passage just quoted, this process of casting off limitations, of recognizing the arbitrariness of more and more of our cherished familiar preconceptions, has its analogue in the spiritual life. 'Discriminate!' says the Vedantic philosopher, 'Discriminate between what is universal and absolute, and what is particular and relative!' The discipline of monism is primarily a negative one. It does not place before us any dogma about ultimate truth or where it is to be found. It tells us, if we want to find something real, eternal, and absolute, to begin by discerning with ruthless clarity which aspects of life are *not* real, eternal, or absolute. Which things have value in and for themselves, and which have value only insofar as certain other preconditions obtain? And we are not merely to discern this distinction intellectually, but to live our lives in its light, giving up attachment to what is transitory and relative.

It will of course be objected that this similarity between the disciplines of science and of monistic religion is a mere analogy, a parallelism of words but not of content. It will be said that science is concerned with factual truths, and religion with values. To this we make two answers : Philosophically, facts and values cannot be ultimately separated. What we see in the world is to a great extent arbitrary, determined by what we *want* to see ; and conversely, if we are to adopt rational values in life, they cannot be arbitrary, but must accord with the facts of our own constitution. Psychologically, the human mind is one, and cannot be made to divide its aspirations into water-tight compartments, seeking only facts in one compartment and only values in another. Therefore, dissimilar as science and religion admittedly now appear, we shall persist — as Swami Vivekananda did — in viewing them as particular aspects, temporarily separated, of one general aspiration of the human spirit after that which is at the same time absolutely real and absolutely good.

Through the practice of religion, the prophets of religion tell us, we can reach the Absolute. Can science also reach anything absolute? Not, we suspect, in its present form. For it labours under a contradiction inherent in its present mode of procedure. In spite of its determination to rid itself of all arbitrary preconceptions, there is one preconception of which it cannot rid itself — namely, the real existence of the external physical world. This or that aspect of sense-experience may be questioned by science ; but sense-experience in toto cannot be questioned. We may argue the nature of space and time, and of the electrons and protons composing this chair. But the fact of the chair as a real observable entity in space and time can hardly be argued by science. Science as it stands now cannot raise the question whether this waking state is like the dream state — something which is arbitrary in toto, and from which we may expect somehow to 'wake up'. Why can it not do so? Because science needs a foundation, a universal criterion of truth and validity to which to appeal. It finds this in the common sense-perception of mankind, refined by instruments of exact measurement. Metaphysics is notoriously subjective ; but all,

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whether idealist or materialist, communist or capitalist, will agree of the pointer-reading of an electronic measuring apparatus. To question this foundation of common sense-experience fruitfully would require that the questioner place himself upon a deeper foundation, independent of sense-experience; and such a deeper foundation science does not possess. We are again reminded of Swami Vivekananda's words, spoken in a similar context:

> 'No amount of knowledge of the external world would solve the problem. "But," says the scientist, "we are just beginning to know a little. Wait a few thousand years and we shall get the solution." "No," says the Vedantist, for he has proved beyond all doubt that the mind is limited, that it cannot go beyond certain limits — beyond time, space, and causation. . . . Every attempt to solve the laws of causation, time, and space would be futile, because the very attempt would have to be made by taking for granted the existence of these three.' ('Maya and Illusion,' Works, Vol. II, p. 91).

This then is the fundamental limitation of present-day science. It cannot seriously question the reality and objectivity of the sense-perceived world. But, after all, this objectivity may well be an arbitrary assumption on our part. Who can tell whether this whole fabric of so-called waking life is in fact a dream from some deeper point of view? As the Greek poet says:

> 'Who knows if living after all is death,
> While death is counted life by those below?'

But this is just where Vedanta begins. It proposes to question the sense-perceived world in toto, and to ask whether or not it is arbitrary, projected by the perceiver, like a dream. Further, like the sciences, it questions not merely speculatively but operationally. Just as physics analyzes a concept such as energy by analyzing the means whereby we measure it, so Vedanta proposes to question the status of the external world by analyzing the instrument by which we perceive it — namely, the mind. It sets out to subject the entire range of our mental processes, including our reason, to a deep scrutiny. Thus Vedanta begins with psychology. But this is not behaviouristic psychology, which approaches the mind through the body and the external world — the very concepts we desire to question. The tool for study here is introspection, which turns the searchlight of the mind itself upon itself. Of course introspection is a very difficult art. The entire system of raja-yoga, the science of meditation and concentration, has been developed in order to enable man to quiet the waves of his mind until introspection becomes possible as a tool for the discovery of truth.

Before we mention the techniques of raja-yoga, however, it will be well to face one very serious and crucial question — the question which underlies every discussion on whether religion can ever be 'scientific'. It is this: Science, as we have seen, adopts common sense-experience as its ultimate criterion of fact. We saw that, in order to question this criterion, it would be necessary to place oneself upon a deeper foundation, to put in its place another, deeper criterion of fact and reality. What is this deeper criterion to be? Introspection, as every beginner in the practice of it knows, is notoriously uncertain. We create what we dream, and likewise we create what we introspect. Further, my introspection is mine alone. What it reveals to me is my own world. How can any factual truth, universally valid, be ascertained by such an intensely private and individual method? How can introspection provide us with a non-personal criterion of fact?

We say that the existence of such a sure foundation for 'objective introspection' cannot be either proved or disproved to one who is not himself already adept in the practice of meditation and concentration. It cannot be established *a priori*. One has to try introspection seriously, and then see if it leads to universally valid truths. One can however speculate what kind of mental state would be needed as a foundation for reliable, non-private introspection — leaving aside for the moment the question whether such a state is

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possible. To begin with, the difficulty with introspection, as we have hinted, is that the mind creates what it introspects, even as it creates what it dreams. Under what impulsion does it thus subtly create? Under the impulsion of uncontrolled and usually unrecognized desires and fears. So, to be an objective witness of 'mental reality', we must stand on a vantage point outside of all desires and fears, yet retaining an intense awareness. Is this possible? At first sight it is not at all clear that it is possible. The answer depends on the nature of man. If we are at bottom a perishable body and no more, then presumably fears and desires are of our essence, and we cannot eliminate them without eliminating awareness itself. Now it is the cardinal teaching of Vedanta that there is a hidden eternal foundation within each man — which is his true Self and is of the very nature of awareness — which has nothing to do with the changes, desires, and fears inherent in the body and mind. On that Self he can stand; therein lies his complete fulfilment; having known it, he cannot be drawn back again into the realm of desires and fears. Only by viewing reality from the vantage point of that Self, says Vedanta, can one perceive 'mental reality' as it truly is. Again, there is the other question: Will two men, each established in the Self, perceive the *same* 'mental reality'? Or will each still be seeing only his own private world? Vedanta maintains that, just as physically we are all part of the same physical world, which is perceived in common by all, so are we all, as minds, part of the same mental world, which can be perceived in common by all of us independently of the bodily senses. Thus, to the adept, introspection reveals a world which is not private to himself but is common to all minds. Indeed, at its highest reach, Vedanta declares that at the level of the Self there is no difference between man and man; that all differences reside in the body and mind, and when we pass beyond these we are completely one.

Thus Vedanta asserts that there is within man's consciousness a foundation for the awareness of reality, on the basis of which we can without prejudice examine our customary ideas of the reality of the external world, and see whether they are arbitrary or not. But, to become established in it, we have to go through an arduous course of training; and until that training is far advanced we can have no guarantee (apart from the assurances of sages and prophets) that we are not following a will-o'-the-wisp. The sceptic, of course, will suggest that whatever training we undertake will be merely a new conditioning of the mind, and therefore of little value as a means to factual truth. Thus, the validity of raja-yoga as a training for the perception of truth can only be a working hypothesis at the beginning, which one man may accept and which another with equal right may reject. Nevertheless, one may hope that, among those few individuals who have succeeded in fully quieting their minds, there will be agreement regarding the rarefied truths which they perceive in meditation. Even the fact of this agreement, however, could not be fully proved to the uninitiated.

On this question of reliability and mutual agreement Swami Vivekananda once spoke thus:

> 'Deep, deep within is the soul, the essential man, the Atman. Turn the mind inward and become united to that; and from that standpoint of stability, the gyrations of the mind can be watched and facts observed, which are to be found in all persons. Such facts, such data, are to be found by those who go deep enough, and only by such. . . .
>
> 'If you intend to study the mind you must have systematic training. You must practise to bring the mind under your control, to attain to that consciousness from which you will be able to study the mind and remain unmoved by any of its wild gyrations. Otherwise the facts observed will not be reliable; they will not apply to all people, and therefore will not be truly facts or data at all. . . . Among that class who have gone deeply into the study of the mind, the facts observed have been the same no matter in what part of the world such persons may be or what religious belief they may have.' ('The Importance of Psychology,' Works, Vol. VI, pp. 31, 32).

(To be continued)

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HE IS STILL A BEACON LIGHT

SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

[Swami Shraddhananda, a former Editor of the *Udbodhan*, the Bengali journal of the Order, is now an assistant minister of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco. In this short paper he impresses on our minds the unity underlying some of the apparent contradictions in Swamiji's utterances. — *Ed.*]

Swami Vivekananda should not be looked upon as a powerful figure belonging to the past history of our country. He is surely a living influence in the history that is being made at present. There was a time when the fiery words of this great Sannyasin kindled and sustained in many young men of India the spirit of self-sacrifice for the motherland. Not a few of our leaders who guided the struggle for India's independence were inspired by his life and example. But even today when India is free the need for Swamiji's message is not gone, for stimulation to political freedom is only a part of that message. Even responsible leaders are realizing now that the attainment of independence has been but one step toward total national well-being. Many more steps remain yet to be covered. Numerous thinkers with different standpoints have been putting forward various views with regard to these steps. Many researches are also being conducted. Those in authority very often hold aloft many hopes and go on appealing to people for help and co-operation. Considerable anxiety and sense of frustration too are expressed from time to time. We believe that the ideas of Swami Vivekananda about national reconstruction can help a great deal toward removing much of our confusion in this regard. In his message can be found the clue to resolving the severe conflict in our mind between stereotyped patterns in our government and society on the one hand and drastically reactionary movements on the other. The modern Indian nation did not have one single 'father' as certain quarters like to proclaim. Modern India was built by the combined genius and efforts of a legion of heroic workers, thinkers and savants. Swami Vivekananda was undoubtedly one of these. Time has not yet come to put these 'fathers' of the nation in a showcase. We have to actively remember each one of them, seek light from their sayings for the solution of our problems. Particularly it is necessary to turn to Swami Vivekananda and try to guide our thoughts and activities according to his directions.

The Swami lived in this world for only thirty-nine years. The powerful personality that was manifested in this short span of life had many striking facets. Equally wonderful is the variety of themes about which he spoke and wrote. For many, therefore, it is as difficult to perceive a complete picture of his character as it is to find a consistent harmony among his different utterances. Sometimes he appears as a great Sannyasin with intense renunciation, adept in the yogas of jñāna, bhakti and dhyāna like his master, Sri Ramakrishna; at other times we find in him the clear image of a self-forgetful servant of his motherland deeply absorbed in the furtherance of the material well-being of the masses. Swamiji may be taken as a serene philosopher with vast wisdom, and it is equally possible to look on him as a sociologist or an educator with unprecedented foresight. To many he is a devoted and dynamic representative of orthodox Hinduism; to others, again, his presentation of Hinduism seems to have deviated considerably from the ancient way. Sister Nivedita and Miss Josephine MacLeod, two of his famous Western disciples, testify to the deep emotional fervour they used to witness in the face of their master when he would say the word 'India'. The same Vivekananda may as well have the claim of being a citizen of the world in the truest sense of the word. When he is seen to discuss China or analyze the mode of living, education and industry of the Japanese, when he is feeling

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Old Temple of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, the first ever Hindu Temple to be built in the West (1905).

New Temple of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco. Dedicated in 1959.

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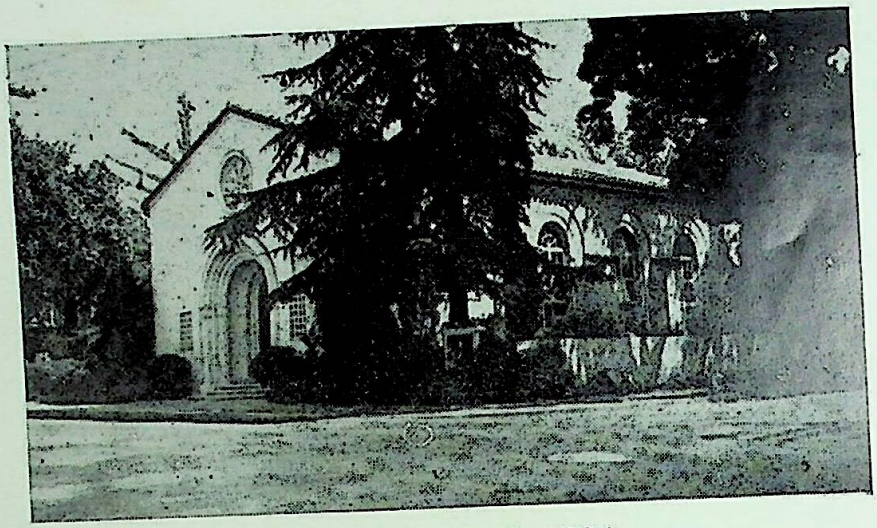

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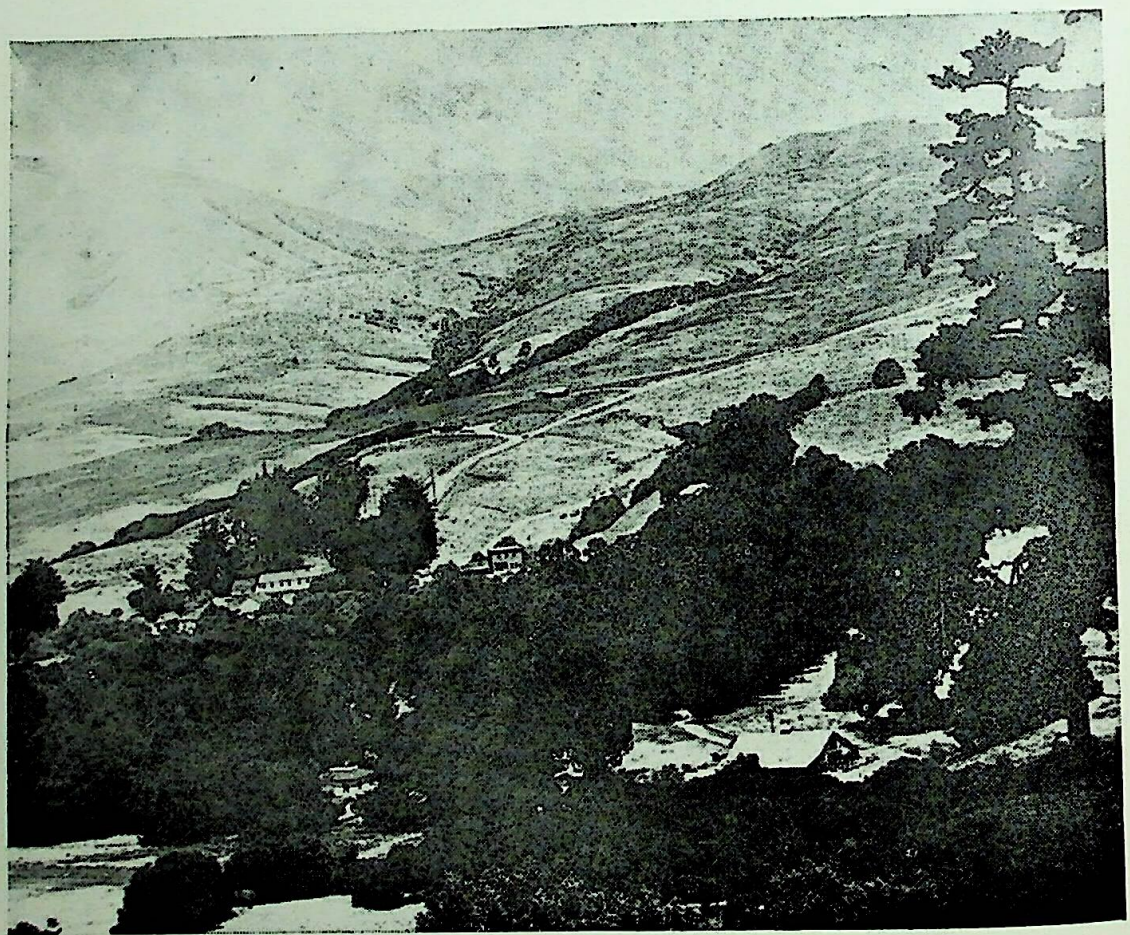

A bird's eye view picture of the Retreat of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, at Olema (an hour's drive from San Francisco).

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the heartbeat of Europe with a mature historian's insight, when he is mixing in the American society as if he belonged to it, or losing himself in the antiquities of Egypt, Turkey and Greece — who would then say that Vivekananda was only an Indian and his heart was satisfied by counting the well-being of India alone?

And yet through these different traits in Swamiji's personality there must be a thread of unity. Those traits are not mutually contradictory.

When we hear him say, 'For the next fifty years this alone shall be our keynote, — this, our great Mother India. Let all other vain gods disappear for that time from our minds. This is the only god that is awake, — our own race. Everywhere His hands, everywhere His feet, everywhere His ears. He covers everything. All other gods are sleeping... The first of all worship is the worship of the Virat, of those all around us' ('The Future of India', an address in Madras), the question arises in our mind, is he the same person who elsewhere spoke so passionately about Self-knowledge, austerities and renunciation? Sometimes Swamiji pays glowing tribute to the glories of ancient India. At other times his words are full of sharp criticism against many old customs and mores. Now he praises eloquently Western society, education and science. Again he speaks fearlessly about the worthlessness of the material civilization of the Occident. Yet we cannot believe that there is no intrinsic harmony among the apparently conflicting viewpoints.

The dream of a future India which Swami Vivekananda enunciated in his 'Hinduism and Sri Ramakrishna' is not based on any partial achievement. It is the picture of an all-round expansion of the whole Indian nation. Food, clothing, secure shelter, health, education, industrial progress — these surely are its primary factors, but social freedom, national unity and above all a resuscitation of religious values form vital elements in that national growth. According to Swamiji's imagination, future India is to be a unique model of nations. Each nation has to advance in its own way to its cherished ideal. The advancement of India too must have its own characteristic quality which should not copy that of America or China or Japan or Russia. Vivekananda over and over again warned his countrymen that attempts to cast one nation completely in the pattern of another are sure to jeopardize if not destroy its essential vitality. India must learn many things from the Western nations but must not on that account turn Western.

Swami Vivekananda was not only a saint, religious leader and philosopher of the highest order but he had to function also as a great patriot, educationist, social reformer and a humanist with unparalleled sympathy and understanding. It was natural, therefore, that he manifested different phases of personality in different contexts. But one should never suspect any division in the total makeup of his character. His was a wonderfully integrated character tuned to the infinite and turned earthward for the service of God in Man. Absolutely unselfish, dynamic in action and profound in his judgements, he was really a beacon light for humanity in general and for the Indian people in particular.

Since the problems of India were manifold in the different levels of her life, Swamiji had often to speak from diverse angles. Each of his utterances has to be judged with regard to its particular context. There is not really any contradiction between any two of his statements. To Swamiji's thinking, the material progress of India need not have to stand on the ruins of her spiritual culture. Let India move forward in science and technology, but let her not abandon her faith in God, her worship and prayers in temples, her spiritual contemplation and pursuit of the Eternal. Free from the selfishness and superstitions of the past, a new, virile society has to emerge in India, but there will be no place in it for perversities, injustice and unbridled sensuality. In Swamiji's speeches and writings we get a clue as to how the different problems of our country can have a well-balanced solution on these lines. The ideal Indian character of the

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future should also imply a harmony of several contraries — serene calmness and tremendous activity, natural strength and deep humility, profound spiritual wisdom and absorbing concern for the world, intense patriotism and genuine goodwill toward all nations, unshakable self-confidence and unreserved openness to learning from others. Such a character need not be considered an idle dream. In Swami Vivekananda we can see such a harmony realized.

He himself has said, 'How many Vivekanandas shall be born in time.' Is it not a significant hint for the future of India?

BHAGAWAN RAMAKRISHNA

DILIP KUMAR ROY

[Sri Dilip Kumar Roy is well-known both in India as well as the West as a poet and as an authority on Music. In this and the poem appearing on page 236, he pays his homage to the twin personalities, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda on the occasion of the great Swami's Birth Centenary. — *Ed.*]

O pinnacle spirit of our age, O Mother Kali's deputy
And darling son — who haildest Her as thy All-in-all, we bow to thee!
Lord Ramakrishna, thou camst to lavish on all the largess of Her Light,
While we outlawed Her radiant Truth — blinded, alas, by maya's night!

Seeing us sinking in despond, yoked to the weakling's worldliness,
Flashing thy golden dawn thou calledst to deliver us from our dark distress.

Thou sangst: "If you cry like a child: 'Mother where art thou? Come apace!'
"She'll hold you in Her arms and kiss away your tears in tenderness.
"Hark, every heart that sings in love — but echoes Her Love's own minstrelsy!
"And sun and moon and stars ring with Her Soul's self-luminous melody."

Seeing us sinking in despond, yoked to the weakling's worldliness,
Flashing thy golden dawn thou calledst to deliver us from our dark distress.

"All who in simple faith appeal, asylum at Her feet shall find:
"Only the rebel who spurns Her lustre gropes in the labyrinth of his mind.
"Only Her celestial Glance redeems our way-lost destiny
"And all upon whom She has smiled are ransomed everlastingly."

Seeing us sinking in despond, yoked to the weakling's worldliness,
Flashing thy golden dawn thou calledst to deliver us from our dark distress.

"Power of science, glamour of wealth nor beauty of art can win to Her Grace:
"They are the siren gleams that veil Her last apocalyptic Face.
"We go on counting boughs and branches, leaves and tendrils pompously,
"Forgetting, fools, 'tis fruit that saves — not pride that flaunts our pedantry."

Seeing us sinking in despond, yoked to the weakling's worldliness,
Flashing thy golden dawn thou calledst to deliver us from our dark distress.

Thou never wouldst crave aught for thyself nor pause to take thought for the morrow,
But rainedst on all unstintingly thy nectarous words to heal their sorrow.
So, poets, kings and sages chant in rapture thy name, passing sweet
And Vivekananda, the great world-conqueror, laid his soul, Lord, at thy feet.

Seeing us sinking in despond, yoked to the weakling's worldliness,
Flashing thy golden dawn thou calledst to deliver us from our dark distress.

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MANKIND NEEDS THE COMPREHENSIVE VIVEKANANDA

SWAMI BUDHANANDA

[Swami Budhananda, a former Editor of the *Vedanta Kesari*, is now assistant minister at the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center, New York. He stresses the necessity of comprehending Vivekananda not in a fragmentary but in a comprehensive way; and cautions us not to be carried away by some particular utterances of Vivekananda by neglecting all the other complementary writings and advices. — *Ed.*]

I

Swami Vivekananda's name conjures up in one's mind all that is shining and glorious, noble and ennobling, living and life-giving, all that is vigorous and invigorating, positive and purposive; all that is true and pure, undying and illuminating, in the national heritage of India. Vivekananda is the very personification of all that was good, great and glorious in the spiritual culture of mankind. What is more, he represents the future wave of the transcendental religion of man.

This being the year of his birth Centenary many waves of enthusiasm have already arisen for Vivekananda and his message, in India and other countries in the world. Many more will arise. There is a great need to keep this enthusiasm in perspective. Vivekananda belongs to all humanity and all posterity. The more the days will pass, thinking and ardent people everywhere in the world will realize that he symbolized in him and also gave to humanity something crucially important without which even its survival would be doubtful, not to speak of any higher evolution of human civilization.

Therefore anywhere in the world of today, for any right thinking person, who wants to feel in an oceanic manner for all humanity, sweeping through all barriers, and work for the upliftment of all in and through his own life, there can hardly be any other study more beneficial and rewarding than the Vivekananda-idealism.

The whole of human civilization is passing through a critical stage. Humanity is sick, sick of the ironical pairs of its opposites; power and imbecility; plenty and penury; knowledge and ignorance; speed and want of a goal. And yet, before all these problems even got shaped in the course of history, the solution of them was made known to man. That is Vivekananda and his message. In the saying it may appear to be an over-simplification of world problems. But when we see that all problems have some tap roots, we no longer doubt that there can be some 'tap' solutions too, if such a term is permissible. This is how it is possible to have the solution of many and various problems of humanity in one man's message, for he taught us how to work at the root from which every thing issues and weaves this perplexing texture of history.

Having had the plenary experience of the Ultimate Reality, Vivekananda taught that existence is one and therefore real man is one and never two or more, though apparent men are many. This is the basic truth. If, what we think and do, does not lead us to the realization of this truth, from such thoughts and actions problems are bound to arise and afflict humanity. Only such thoughts and actions as flow from experiential knowledge of this truth will not create problems for humanity. But at a given point of time we may not have even a handful of people with such knowledge.

What then could be done to serve humanity in this situation? The answer was in Vivekananda's action which was his teaching. He spent his precious life in awakening individual souls and creating in them an urge for self-realization. If the ocean of Vivekananda's

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teachings could be reduced to one drop, here is that drop. In this one drop there is the cure of all the virulent diseases the world is suffering from. 'Manifest the divinity within you and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it.' Manifest the Ātman. Do whatever is needed for that in a way which may be helpful to others also for doing the same. Then you have shot yourself across your personal problems, and also served humanity, in the most rewarding and creative way possible.

Study of Vivekananda can end here or begin from here. Then our enthusiasm for Vivekananda and his teachings will stay in perspective. It is necessary to see the ocean across the waves and also to know that all the waves are made of the same water particles.

Gautama, the Buddha, said of his own teachings: 'As the great ocean has only one taste, the taste of salt, so my doctrine has only one flavour, the flavour of emancipation.' Truly, this could be said of Vivekananda's teachings too. Those who will stick to this fundamental fact about his teachings will not easily lose their way in the vastness, variety and seeming contradictions in Vivekananda's teachings.

II

Vivekananda touched human life and its problems at many points and levels in a variety of ways. His teachings constitute a power-house of ideas from which numberless people simultaneously and endlessly can draw for their respective purposes, and cross-purposes too. This creates a problem.

It has also been revealed, specially in India, since the starting of the Vivekananda Centenary, that he has universal appeal among all sections of people. And various sections of people are enthusiastic about Vivekananda for different reasons and purposes, which they find fulfilled in him. This would not appear to be anything wrong; as the need, so the take.

But then the question is, are we taking the real Vivekananda and his inspiration even for our sectional purposes? A time has come in human history when we require the comprehensive Vivekananda and not the segmentary Vivekananda even for our sectional purposes. It is India's special national duty to demonstrate before the world an earnest attempt to understand and follow the comprehensive Vivekananda. Before the twentieth century saw the light of the day Vivekananda himself warned us, 'There cannot be any progress without the whole world's following in its wake; and it is becoming clearer everyday that the solution of any problem can never be attained on national, or racial or any narrow ground.' Even if we want to 'utilize' Vivekananda for our purposes, we should see to it that the whole Vivekananda comes in the wake of our invoking his teachings. Otherwise we would not be helping ourselves as much as we could have done through what we are drawing from Vivekananda. Maybe, in that case, we would not be drawing inspiration from the real Vivekananda as he is.

III

A critical and dispassionate analysis of some of our common ways of drawing from Vivekananda will show how often we are tending to shy away from the comprehensive Vivekananda and stay satisfied with certain catch ideas which answer our immediate and sectional purposes.

It is customary in India to dilate on Vivekananda as the patriot-saint of modern India. Undoubtedly Vivekananda was a patriot and also a saint. Therefore it would appear to be perfectly right to call him a patriot-saint. But in what sense was Vivekananda a patriot? Patriotism in today's world is a necessary evil. It usually goes with jingoism. There is not a crime in the world man has not committed in the name of patriotism. Yet in today's world without patriotism a nation cannot survive as an entity. Therefore patriotism bears a badge of honour in every country.

Vivekananda was not a patriot in any accepted sense of the word. His patriotism was an offshoot of his universalism born of his plenary experience of ultimate reality. Having

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known experientially the Atman-Brahman equation, Vivekananda became incapable of seeing things in an ordinary man's small way. He was no idolator of geography. Therefore he declared that for that one sentiment 'universalism' he was ready to sacrifice everything. After his great success in the Parliament of Religions, when earnest requests came from India for a quick return, he sharply wrote to his countrymen : 'I belong to the world as much as to India, no humbug about that. What country has exclusive claim on me? Am I a nation's slave?'

In his 'Song of the Sannyasin', were recorded some of the innermost vibrations of his heart. In that poem he sings :

> 'Have thou no home. What home can hold thee, friend?
> The sky thy roof, the grass thy bed, and food
> What chance may bring—
> . . . Like rolling river free,
> Thou ever be, sannyasin bold!'

This was the inner texture of Vivekananda's personality whom we call a patriot-saint.

Did he not then love India? Who says he did not? Who ever loved India like he did? But then we have to see the point that Vivekananda's love for India is of a piece with his love for humanity as a whole. It was in India that the problems of existence were delved in to their utmost depths and their solutions discovered. That all-important knowledge which is an essential part of India's spiritual heritage was going to be the one great saving factor for all humanity, not only for survival but also for further evolution of human civilization. If India's spiritual heritage were gone or lost the world would be a terrible place to live in. Therefore Vivekananda saw the supreme need of making India the idol of his love and worship. Vivekananda's patriotism is the cadence of his compelling compassion for mankind as a whole. And his concern for entire mankind came to him by commission from the Most High.

It is not suggested that Vivekananda's patriotism was a reasoned-out approach to India. It was as spontaneous as his breathing and his knowledge of Atman. But *we* require to understand it in the context of the totality of his personality and philosophy of life.

While on the idealistic side Vivekananda's patriotism is seldom discussed, on his realistic side too, his definition of patriotism is in effect ignored or rejected in India. Vivekananda said to the Indians :

> 'You must always remember that every nation must save itself; so must every man; do not look to others for help. You must not depend on any foreign help. Nations, like individuals, must help themselves. This is real patriotism. If a nation cannot do that, its time has not yet come. It must wait.' (V. 51)

Is this definition of 'real patriotism' much cared for in India today? It will be furiously asked : Did Vivekananda then want us to have nothing to do with other countries in this world of interdependence? Far from it. In modern times it was Swami Vivekananda who pioneered the fruitful East-West encounter and introduced an enduring dialogue on the high level of mutuality of respect and understanding. It was he who raising his voice above all types of national though natural chauvinisms, declared that East had need for the West as much as the West needed the East for building an enduring human civilization. If this was not understood and worked for, both East and West would fall in the chasm between them and disappear in ignominy. With the interest of both the West and India at heart Vivekananda therefore said :

> 'Do you know what my idea is? By preaching the profound secrets of Vedanta religion in the Western world, we shall attract the sympathy and regard of those mighty nations, maintaining for ourselves the position of their teacher in spiritual matters, let them remain our teachers in all material concerns . . . Nothing will come of crying day and night before them, "Give me this!" or "Give me that!" When there grows a link of sympathy and regard between both nations, by give-and-take intercourse, there will then be no need for these noisy cries. They will do everything of their own accord. I believe that by this cultivation of religion and wider diffusion of

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Vedanta, both this country and the West will gain enormously. To me the pursuit of politics is a secondary means in comparison with this. I will lay down my life to carry out this belief practically.' (VI. 48-49)

If the testament of Vivekananda's patriotism is adequately understood then there will arise in India a new enthusiasm for dynamic spirituality. If the Indians will have anything to teach, they must know and have the substance of religion in experience and also in its various theories. From the West for a long foreseeable time India will have to learn how to control outer nature. And in its turn the West will require to learn how to control inner nature. There is great pathos in the fact that man knows how to sail in outer space but does not know how to live with his own mind. India has that knowledge. But that knowledge has a chance of becoming obscure or even lost if we worship only at the shrines of national laboratories and power-projects and sing hymns of secularity. It is no use having spiritual knowledge only in books or being able only to quote scriptures. What is needed is to preserve the Indian way of life, so that in the normal course the nation will continue to be producing, as it has been in the past, some spiritually illumined souls to bear testimony to supersensuous truths, and also to teach them from experience. Otherwise the springs of India's spiritual resources will dry up and India will have nothing to teach. That will be a betrayal of providential trust and an act against humanity.

Therefore, preservation of the Indian way of life [1] is of supreme importance.

Today after the Chinese invasion Vivekananda's name is being widely invoked in India for strengthening the nation from within. If this had been done when India became free, no invasion of India would have taken place. Even today there is likelihood of using Vivekananda's message in a wrong way. No one should use his message as a temporary pep-talk.

India must be made strong in every conceivable way not because China has invaded her but because, as Vivekananda taught: 'Strength is life, weakness is death, strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is constant strain and misery. Weakness is death . . .'; 'Infinite strength is religion and God'; 'The best guide in life is strength.' Vivekananda advocated the cultivation of strength always and everywhere in all possible ways, not for saving the skin, or the face-saving of anyone, but for manifesting the divinity. Even in the direst emergency we must not forget this fundamental lesson. We should remember the situation in which the Gītā was spoken. The exact time for following a high philosophy is when we are in a crisis. While fighting the enemy, let not India become small-minded, short-sighted or chicken-hearted. *Satyam eva jayate*, truth alone triumphs.

Swami Vivekananda is today acknowledged in India, perhaps somewhat belatedly, as a nation-builder. This very acknowledgment will do India some good. But more important is the acceptance of the age-old national ideal which the Swami redefined for India, and to deliberately build the national mind with that material. Whatever will issue out of that mind will be for the good. It is no use

[1] Today when India appears to be passing through such a disturbed ideational state of mind, many may even raise their eye-brows and ask: 'What is the Indian way of life? Is it a new kind of Americanism?'

Swami Vivekananda defined in unmistakable terms what the Indian way of life is. He said: 'Religion and religion alone is the life of India, and when that goes, India will die in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kuvera's wealth poured upon the head of everyone of their children.'

Liberation-mindedness is the dominating urge of the Indian way of life. Society, politics, education, law,—everything must facilitate man's march towards the liberation of the spirit. The key-word of the Indian way of life is not the gaining of sāmrājya (empire), but of swārājya (illumination).

Indian way of life consists of twofold movements of the soul, *pravritti* or outwardization and *nivritti* or inwardization, the former leading to the latter through experience and selection. In this way of life pleasure (kama) and wealth (artha) have to be enjoyed through righteousness (dharma). And dharma has to subserve the requirement of liberation of the spirit (moksha) from the bondage of matter.

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calling him 'patriot-saint' and 'nation-builder' if we do not accept the national ideal defined by him and if we reject the nation-building material which he placed before the nation.

> 'The national ideals of India are renunciation and service. Intensify her in those channels and the rest will take care of itself. The banner of the spiritual cannot be raised too high in this country. In it alone is salvation.' (V. 157)

Without whole-heartedly accepting this teaching of the Swami India cannot follow Vivekananda. We are facing serious times. Wordy and sentimental adoration is of no use. It is time India made up her mind as to what new shape she would give herself.

According to Swami Vivekananda 'renunciation and service' are not only the national ideals of India; they also constitute the building material for the nation. No ideals can be said to be the national ideals unless they can be practised by all individuals in all levels of society, and unless these ideals answer the various requirements of growing individuals until they reach the fulfilment of their lives, which according to the accepted view of Indian way of life is the liberation of the spirit. Moreover, the national ideals, while being true to the age-old spirit of the civilization, should also be perfectly workable in the world of today and in the unlimited future.

The national ideas of India, renunciation and service, symbolize the acme of human wisdom. They issue from the Vedas and are open to all future. They take perfect care of the temporal and eternal in man simultaneously. It is not a world negating idea but a God-positing ideal. They answer the needs of the growing individual and also of society and the nation as a whole. And those ideals are in perfect coherence with the Indian way of life.

Renunciation means a perpetual movement towards the higher and the greater until the Supreme spirit is realized. It is not only a monastic ideal in India. It is the universal ideal on which the Indian way of life is based. The ancient wisdom of India is succinctly put in the first verse of the Īśa Upaniṣad. It is said whatever exists in this changing world should be covered by the knowledge that everything is enveloped by God. And one should enjoy this world and protect the Self through renunciation. This is the only sane ideal for all human beings. Those who are called house-holders practice this ideal in a relative way and the monastics are expected to practice it in a total manner. The concept of sacramental marriage is a form of relative renunciation. Through such a sacrament the householder renounces all women and men, except the wife or husband.

In this manner every duty of the householder is to be sanctified by relative renunciation. The monk, however, has to practise total renunciation.

The ideal of service again has its roots in the Vedas. It was understood to be the only spiritually purposive pattern of human relationship for cementing a society in mutuality of helpfulness. Renunciation orients us Godward, service manward, and thus we grow inwardly while neither the earth nor the heaven is ignored.

This is the eternal ideal of India. In future it will be known that it is the universal ideal for all mankind. With the material of this ideal India will have to build herself anew. Then alone she will be able to stay true to her way of life. By doing so alone India will be producing those servants of mankind, who will bring light in darkness.

Those who acknowledge Vivekananda as a builder of modern India, are expected to accept this fact too. Not only that, they should also explore how they can carry through the implications of this fact into whatever they think and do. Thus alone they will be following Vivekananda. And in no other way.

There are quite a few other common segmentary emphases on Vivekananda's teachings, which if they go uncomplemented may create problematic results.

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Sometimes we are apt to quote Swami Vivekananda to inveigh against priestcraft. And we may not remember and mention the handsome tribute Swami Vivekananda gave to the Brahmins and their services to Hindu culture.

Sometimes we are apt to emphasize Vivekananda's gospel of material prosperity, not at all mentioning his emphasis on keeping strongly up to the monastic tradition for both women and men.

Sometimes we are apt to quote from his gospel of strength and fearlessness and leave aside his emphasis on the life of purity, patience and perseverance.

Sometimes we are apt to lay stress on his scientific spirit and forget his extreme hunger to get drowned in *samadhi*.

Sometimes we are apt to be inspired by Vivekananda's whole-hearted love for Hinduism but we may not take so much notice of his dream of India with 'Vedantic brain and Islamic body.'

Sometimes we are apt to be enthusiastic about Vivekananda's great love and concern for the masses, and his emphasis on their education, but we may be very slow in accepting his definition of education as manifestation of perfection already in man. We may even reject outright his idea that religion is the core of education.

We may give the impression that we are working out Vivekananda's scheme of education but while enthusiastically teaching sciences, we may have nothing to do with the teaching of Sanskrit.

Sometimes we are apt to cite Vivekananda's dynamism, activism, energism, but we may forget to sing his song of the Sannyasin.

Sometimes we are apt to appreciate Swami Vivekananda's imperative that we must go out and compare notes with other nations, otherwise we cannot keep pace with the progressive world of ideas and achievements. But it appears that often enough we are rather hesitant and even too timid to mention one of Vivekananda's salient teachings that India has a mission in the world, what to speak of Swami Vivekananda's dream of India's world conquest.

If we could, some of us would not hesitate to expurge these words from his writings :

> 'The only condition of awakened and vigorous national life is the conquest of the world by Indian thought.' (III. 277)
>
> 'We must go out, we must conquer the world through our spirituality, and philosophy. There is no other alternative, we must do it or die.' (III. 277)

We are apt to think : Vivekananda's gospel is perfect but for this talk of world conquest. How can we take Vivekananda seriously in this matter? It is quite old-fashioned and harmful to talk of world conquest in these days of armament race and cold war. Of course it is possible to argue that Vivekananda was not speaking of world conquest by arms but by Indian thought. Supposing that he did that, how can we go along with him? Every religion or every 'idea' thinks that it has a mission in the world. They all dream of world conquest. If this idea is given sanction, there will be clashes of ideas which will be followed by booming of guns. Therefore we cannot accept this idea of Vivekananda, though we accept all his other ideas.

Now here is a crucial issue. If we think we can follow Vivekananda without accepting this teaching, we are deluded. Vivekananda did not speak of this idea as a passing remark. It is not a frill of Vivekananda's ideas which we can trim off to streamline his message. It is one of his fundamental ideas as far as India is concerned. We are not permitted to be in any doubt about this fact, however much we dislike this idea. He said in very precise and clear words :

> 'The story of our conquest has been described by the noble Emperor of India, Asoka, as the conquest of religion and of spirituality. Once more the world must be conquered by India. This is the dream of my life, and I wish that each one

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> of you will have the same dream in your minds, and stop not till you have realized the dream. This is the great ideal before us, and everyone must be ready for it,—the conquest of the whole world by India,—nothing less than that, and we must all get ready for it, strain every nerve for it. Up, India, and conquer the world with your spirituality!' (III. 276-7)

This is the great General's special and urgent command. Do we think we can ignore this and yet be in his army? We have no way of doing it.

We have therefore to understand this idea of Vivekananda clearly and carefully. What did he mean by this conquest? Why did he want it done? The meaning of this conquest is made clear by Vivekananda himself in these words :

> 'Materialism and all its miseries can never be conquered by materialism. Armies when they attempt to conquer armies only multiply and make brutes of humanity. Spirituality must conquer the world.' (III. 277)

Spirituality, according to Vivekananda consists in, as he explains in the preface to his Raja Yoga, conquest of our outer and inner nature for the manifestation of Ātman, and becoming free. When he says, 'Spirituality must conquer the West' he means, India which has some unique spiritual heritage, should share it with humanity, so that the have-nots of the world may have it too. And thus they will be helped in Self-conquest. Vivekananda's idea of India's conquest of the world is only to help everyone in the world in Self-conquest. And the only weapons he proposed to have in his arsenal for this purpose were 'eternal love and service free.' The victory of which Vivekananda dreamed was not for defeating anyone but for vanquishing the cause of man's defeat in life, his spiritual ignorance. Vivekananda dreamt of world conquest, to prevent man from being defeated by the forces of life, world and māyā. He wanted every man to be victorious and to be established in his inalienable sovereignty of Ātman.

He wanted to do it because unless we aim at doing this, everything else is senseless and purposeless. If in India, through false humility, we think that it is none of our business, then, to say the least, we do not understand Vivekananda. And without understanding him, how do we propose to follow him? If we do not propose to follow him, why do we make so much noise about him?

Therefore, if we propose to follow Vivekananda, this awakening cry of world-conquest by India must ring and reverberate again from one end of India to another. And we must clearly understand the purpose and the methodology of this conquest. With infinite compassion for mankind as a whole Vivekananda said :

> 'Little do we understand the heart pangs of millions waiting outside the walls stretching forth their hands for a little sip of that nectar which our forefathers have preserved in this land of India.' (III. 317)

The very rationale of India's continuous existence down the millenniums was the sharing of this nectar. India's mission of world conquest has no alternative, if humanity is to survive. He said :

> 'The reason that we Indians are still living in spite of so much misery, distress, poverty and oppression, from within and without, is that we have a national idea which is yet necessary for the preservation of the world.' (V. 34)

There is no way of being true to Vivekananda's teachings without accepting this fundamental idea of his. When in India we do accept this idea whole-heartedly, we shall be surprised what a galvanizing and integrating effect it will have on Indian national mind. No one can dream of conquest without being strong himself. It is this strength India needs for herself. From strength can come other coveted blessings.

Sometimes we are apt to take Vivekananda inside our hearts, brains and homes. We understand that we require his teachings and inspiration. But most astoundingly we leave

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Sri Ramakrishna outside the gate! This could not be done if we understood the source of Vivekananda's inspiration and message.

It is understood that in small discourses or limited discussions, academic or otherwise, all aspects of Vivekananda's teachings cannot be reflected on. No one is looking for that. What we intend to point out is that we shall be fully aware of the fact that India and the world needs the comprehensive Vivekananda, Vivekananda as he is in his totality and spontaneity, and not a fragmented Vivekananda, of anyone's partial choice.

(To be continued)

All references after the quotations in this article refer to the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*. The Roman figures stand for Volume No. and the Arabic figures refer to page number.

VIVEKANANDA

DILIP KUMAR ROY

O, resplendent soul of India, Beacon in our oceaned pain!
Sorrowless Bard of purity, no mire could mar nor squalor stain!
Whose regal footfall's marvellous cadence mellows still life's din and glare,
Who camst to exhort us, Kali's sons, with earth-born wings the skies to dare.

Thou sangst, Vivekananda: "Mother India calls, how can you sleep?
A truce to crawling in coward fear! Arise, awake love's troth to keep."

We wailed and moaned in bondage, groaned in helpless, lonely penury,
So thou, Redeemer, camst with thy Vedanta's sword to make us free.
Wont to quail at every shadow, we glimpsed no heights where courage glows!
Thy lightning advent clove the atheist haze in a flash, how — no one knows!

Thou sangst, Vivekananda: "Mother India calls, how can you sleep?
A truce to crawling in coward fear! Arise, awake love's troth to keep."

The epiphany of love and light, Sri Ramakrishna, missioned thee
To lead us, worldlings, onward to reclaim our lost divinity.
A miracle ray of Shiva, thou camst panoplied with Kali's powers,
And so thy wisdom's alchemy transmuted thorns to fadeless flowers.

Thou sangst, Vivekananda: "Mother India calls, how can you sleep?
A truce to crawling in coward fear! Arise, awake love's troth to keep."

Thou camst to build a rainbow bridge to unite the sundered East and West,
Chanting: "All are the Mother's children, none is an outcaste, all are blest."
How thy sun-bugle quelled the demon clouds of hate's disharmony
Proclaiming: "They must feel for all, who aspire to Immortality!"

Thou sangst, Vivekananda: "Mother India calls, how can you sleep?
A truce to crawling in coward fear! Arise, awake love's troth to keep."

In thy vast heart of tenderness the world was housed, to thee no one
Was ever an alien, even in paupers thou wouldst see Lord Narayan.
The endless, priceless jewels Heaven gave thee thou didst share with all:
May we thine Image of radiant Grace on the altars of our hearts install.

Thou sangst, Vivekananda: "Mother India calls, how can you sleep?
A truce to crawling in coward fear! Arise, awake love's troth to keep."

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IDEAL OF INDIAN WOMANHOOD ACCORDING TO SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

ROMA CHAUDHURI

[Dr Roma Chaudhuri, M.A., D.Phil., Principal, Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta, who is a great scholar in Sanskrit and English and a writer of great repute, presents Swamiji's idea of 'Indian Womanhood' beautifully in this learned survey. — *Ed.*]

Perhaps, the golden rays of the just-arisen sun had respectfully just touched the holy feet of the great sage Yājñavalkya, when he, desiring to renounce worldly life, called his dear wife Maitreyi to him, and wanted to divide his earthly belongings between her and his second wife Kātyāyani. (Br. Up. 2-4). But straight came the vital question: 'If the whole world be filled with wealth, will that make me *Amṛta* or Immortal'? (Bṛh. Up. 2. 4. 2).

Startled, the sage replied frankly: 'There is no hope for Immortality through wealth'. (Bṛh. Up. 2. 4. 2)

Straight came, again, the second vital question, one of the most memorable ones in the whole History of Mankind: 'What shall I do with that which will not make me Immortal?' (Bṛh. Up. 2. 4. 2)

With no reply to offer, Yājñavalkya gladly taught Maitreyi the kernel, the cream of all Philosophical Theories, all over the world, viz. Ātma-Tattva, the Doctrine of the Soul. (Bṛh. Up. 2. 4)

Those, indeed, were grand, golden, glorious, days for Indian Women, when, they, too, like men, were given the fullest opportunities to develop all the sides of their nature; granted equal rights in all spheres — Family, Society, State; and honoured as *Śaktis* or powers of men, without whom they were absolutely incapable of doing anything, or attaining an end.

But alas! is it not a most inexplicable mystery of life, a most cruel irony of fate that even such women were destined, through the passage of time, to fall down from their high pedestal into the dust-heaps below, and thus, came to be besmeared with mud, the last traces of which have not yet been wholly washed off from them, even after centuries!

Now, think of the epoch-making age — the 19th Century, an age fraught with great possibilities, through the impact of Western Culture and Civilization on our own apparently decadent one! But alas! very few thought of women, confined within the four walls of the *Zenana*, deprived of the invigorating light of knowledge, ancient or modern.

But we Indians firmly believe that in times of dire need, God, in his infinite mercy, sends His own messengers. He cannot let the world, His own manifestation, crumble down and die, unhelped. So, He sends His own messengers to its rescue. And, during the later half of the 19th century, one such great and grand and glorious messenger was our beloved Swamiji, who was born, to quote Sri Ramakrishna, for *Loka-hita* or 'Welfare of the people'.

Really, *Women and the People* — this was the motto of his blessed life.

How touchingly does Sister Nivedita, his direct, closest and most beloved disciple say of her revered Master, in her celebrated work: 'The Master as I saw Him'.

> 'Our Master, at any rate, regarded this Order to which he belonged, as one whose lot was cast for all time, with the lot of *Women and the people*. This was the cry that rose to his lips instinctively, when he dictated to the phonogram, in America, the message that he would send to the Rajah of Khetri. It was the one thought, too, with which he would turn to the disciple at his side, whenever he felt himself nearer than usual

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to death in a foreign country, alone: "Never forget," he would then, say, "the word is: *Women and the people*".'[1]

Swamiji himself, also, asserts vehemently, in his usual straightforward, forceful manner :—

'The uplift of the women, the awakening of the masses, must come first; and then only can any real good come about for the country, for India'.[2]

'In India, there are two great evils: Trampling on the women, and grinding the poor through caste-restrictions'.[3]

'We are horrible sinners, and our degradation is due to our calling women "despicable worms", "gateways of Hell", and so forth! Goodness gracious! There is all the difference between Heaven and Hell!'[4]

In this way, Swamiji, in the midst of his multifarious other important duties, found time to think of women, and devise ways and means for their immediate uplift.

Now, if you want to enable any one to advance, and rise higher the first thing that is necessary is to put before him or her a higher ideal, so that he or she may strive to attain it. Hence, in this connection, Swamiji, in the very beginning discusses, at length the ideals of Indian Womanhood, both in a general and a special sense.

What is an ideal?

Now, what is an Ideal? The ordinary view is that the 'Ideal' and the 'Actual' are two entirely different, not only that, also, opposed things. Thus, in this sense, the Ideal nullifies the Actual. But that is not at all our Indian view. On the contrary, the Indian view is that the Ideal is already, eternally inherent, in the Actual — it is never non-existent there, only non-known. So, the Ideal and the Actual are really, one and the same — differing only from the point of view of *knowing*, never from that of *being*. Thus, the Ideal is not a new *attainment*, but only a *manifestation* of what is already there. Hence, the example of a flower is, very appropriately, given here. Just as a seed inevitably blooms forth in a flower — that being its very nature — so does also Life bloom forth, manifesting all its glory and grandeur, all its beauty and bliss, all its sweetness and sublimity, all its purity and perfection to the fullest. And, this is the Ideal of Life, nothing more, nothing less.

Hence, the Ideal must be brought out from inside, as our eternal heritage, as our birthright, as our essential possession.

Swamiji's view on the Ideal of Indian Womanhood

Swamiji, an ardent upholder of Indian Culture and Civilization, also takes pains to make this clear to all repeatedly, untiringly. For example, compare the following :—

'Knowledge is inherent in man; no Knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things.'[5]

What he asserts, thus, regarding knowledge or Education, is true of all other Ideals, from all points of view.

Now let us come back to the point of issue here: What, according to Swamiji, is the Ideal of Womanhood in a general sense?

In one word it is this: Motherhood. Women are born mothers and mothers they must become. How? Not necessarily, by marrying only and becoming 'mothers' in a biological sense; but, what is more, in a real sense, in a philosophical sense. What is the philosophical sense of 'Mother'? Philosophically, it means a prop, a loving prop, which, so to speak, supports the entire universe of souls and matter. This is the celebrated '*Mātṛ-Tattva*' of India, which is but another name for the '*Śakti-Tattva*', the very foundation of the entire system of Indian Philosophy. And, according to our above contention that the Ideal is the Actual, the unknown Actual, there cannot be any distinction between the

[1] *Op.* 356-57 (3rd Ed.)
[2] VI. 445.
[3] *Our Women*, p. 49.
[4] V. 22.
[5] I. 93.

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philosophical and the empirical. Hence, empirically, no less, a Mother possesses the very same characteristics. Hence, it is she who is the real prop, the living and loving force of the entire family.

A very common idea in the West, even today, is that in India, women have never been granted equal rights with men in any sphere, at all. While vehemently contesting the truth of such an entirely wrong view, we may however, take the liberty, here, of asserting, with all humility, that in one sense, undoubtedly, women in India have never been granted *equal* rights with men — for the simple reason that they have always been granted *higher* rights than they. In what sense, exactly? In the sense of being '*Mothers*'. The Indian view, in fact, never is that fathers and mothers are absolutely equal. Let this not be misinterpreted: Mothers are never *equal*, but always infinitely *superior*, to fathers. Even the *Smṛtikāras*, the mediaeval Law-givers, notorious for their unsympathetic attitude towards women, are unanimous regarding this point. Recall to mind, recall joyfully that wonderful and universally accepted dictum of Manu, the most ancient, at the same time, the most noted and most accepted of all the numerous Law-givers —

'Upādhyāyān daśācārya,
Ācāryāṇām śatam pitā
Sahasrantu pitṛṇ mātā
Gauraveṇātiricyate'
(*Manu-Smṛti* II. 145)

Ten times higher than an '*Upādhyāya*'
Is the '*Acarya*' venerable.
Hundred times higher than an 'Acarya',
Is the 'Father' lovable.
But lo! how great and glorious
One Mother, sweet benign
Surpasses thousands fathers easily
In glory and grandeur, fine.

Such is our glorious conception of 'Motherhood'. And, such is the glorious ideal of Indian Womanhood — Mothers first, Mothers last, Mothers always. Listen to the thundering voice of Swamiji :—

> 'Now, the ideal of women in India is Mother—the Mother first, and the Mother last. The word "woman" calls up to the mind of the Hindu, Motherhood; and God is called "Mother".'[6]

A legitimate question may be asked here: Why has '*Motherhood*' been selected, here as representing the very ideal of Indian Womanhood; and why not '*Wifehood*'? For, as it is, it is the wife, who according to our Scriptures and all religious dictum is the *Sahadharmini*, or the co-partner of a man, in all spheres, and so, absolutely equal to him, his very half, completing him. Take that very beautiful Text in the ancient and celebrated Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad: '*Sa vai naiva reme. Tasmādekaki na ramaté. Sa dvitiyamaicchat. Sa imam evātmānam dvedhā apātayattataḥ. Patisca patnī cābhavatām. Tasmād idam ardha bṛgalamiva .... Tasmadayamakaśaḥ striyā puryata eva*' (Bṛh. Up. 1. 4. 3). 'He did not feel any pleasure. Hence, no one feels any pleasure alone. He desired for a second. He divided His own Self into two parts. In this way — husband and wife were born. So, a wife is like the half of a shell. That is why, the empty space is filled up by a wife.'

Swamiji, in common with other Indians, strongly controverts the above suggestion, viz. to take wifehood as the ideal of womanhood :

> 'In the West, the woman is wife. The idea of womanhood is concentrated there—as the Wife. To the ordinary man in India, the whole force of womanhood is concentrated in motherhood. In the Western home, the wife rules. In an Indian home, the mother rules.'[7]

Why? Because, as pointed out above, the aim of an Indian Woman is not to be merely equal; but also, *superior* to man. And, the only way to be superior to man is to be 'Mother'. Further, as a *wife*, a woman mainly serves the purpose of her husband only. But as a *mother*, she serves the purpose of all.

[6] VIII. 57-58.
[7] Op. cit.

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Even her husband becomes a child to her after a while. Refer to that beautiful Marriage—Benediction—Sukta of the Ṛg Veda, composed by the Mari-Ṛsi Surya :

'Daśāsyām putrānā dhehi, patim ekādaśam Kṛdhi' (Ṛg Veda 10. 85. 45)

O pouring Indra ! give her fortune,
And, sons full of strength.
Give her ten sons sublime,
And make the husband the eleventh.'
(Ṛg Veda 10. 85. 45)

In this way, there can be no doubt whatsoever that the ideal of Motherhood is a much purer, loftier, sweeter one than that of Wifehood. Absolutely pure, absolutely unselfish, absolutely patient, absolutely forgiving, absolutely self-sacrificing, absolutely loving, absolutely wise — such is our mother, the fullest embodiment of the Universal Mother ! What higher aim can a woman have than to become such a mother, in the truest sense of the word ?

Ideal of Womanhood in a Special Sense

Having determined, thus, the glorious ideal of Indian Womanhood, in a general sense, Swamiji, then proceeds to depict the same, in a special sense, in an equally emphatic manner. Such an ideal, according to him, is Sita, and Sita alone. In fact, Swamiji had the highest possible reverence and admiration for this ever-green character of Sita, wife of Rama of the immortal Indian epic *Rāmāyaṇa*. How reverentially, lovingly and touchingly does he refer to Sita, repeatedly, all throughout :

'Sita is typical of India — the idealised India.' [8]

'There is no other Pauranik story that has so permeated the whole nation, so entered into its very life, and has so tingled in every drop of blood of the race, as the ideal of Sita. Sita is the name in India for everything that is good, pure and holy ; everything that in women we call womanly '.[9]

'You may exhaust the literature of the world that is past, and I may assure you that you will have to exhaust the literature of the world of the future before finding another Sita. She is unique, that character was depicted once for all. There may have been several Ramas perhaps, but never more than one Sita ! She is the very type of the true Indian Woman, for, all the Indian ideals of perfected woman have grown out of that one life of Sita ; and here she stands these thousands of years, commanding the worship of every man, woman and child, throughout the length and breadth of the land of Aryavarta. There she will always be, this glorious Sita, purer than purity itself, all-patience and all-suffering. She who suffered that life of suffering, without a murmur, she, the ever-chaste, ever-pure wife, the ideal of the people, the ideal of the gods, the great Sita ; our national God she must always remain.' [10]

'Sita has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is there in the blood of every Hindu man and woman : We are all children of Sita. Any attempt to modernise our women, if it tries to take our women away from that ideal of Sita, is immediately a failure, as we see every day. The woman of India must grow and develop in the foot-prints of Sita, and that is the only way.' [11]

Note the very strong, very emphatic, very clear language used by Swamiji here. This shows his very strong conviction, very firm faith, very deep-rooted idea that each and every Indian woman, nay, each and every woman of the world, must develop along the lines of Sita.

What must, then, women cultivate and acquire to become perfect ? They must cultivate and acquire, after Sita, the five great virtues of purity, patience, unselfishness, strength and spirituality.[12]

Thus, first, what does *Purity* imply ? It implies the fullest manifestation of inner essence ; or transparence, like a glass, through which, so to speak, the light of the soul can be seen clearly by all. In this connection, Swamiji gives the examples of a lamp inside a closed iron-box, and one inside a glass-casket. In the first case, evidently, the light of the lamp cannot be seen ; in the second, it can be done clearly. Our soul, inside the body, is like such a lamp. But through purity

[8] IV. 71.
[9] IV. 72.
[10] III. 255-256.
[11] III. 256.
[12] IV. 72 ; III. 255-256.

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and unselfishness, we can make this outer covering more and more transparent, so that, finally, it becomes as transparent as glass. In this connection, Swamiji refers to the case of Sri Ramakrishna who, in this way, transformed the iron-casket to a glass one through which his inner light could be seen clearly. In exactly the same manner, 'Purity' means: purity of the body and the mind and the soul, so that the soul is not at all obstructed or hampered in any way.

Secondly, what does *Patience* imply. It implies the state of a '*sthita-prajña*' or '*sthita-dhī*', as mentioned in the Gītā (2. 58-72). Such an individual knows the real nature of the world, as well as of his own soul; and so, is not affected by worldly occurrences at all, viz. pleasure-pain, success-failure, birth-death, etc. Like a drop of shining water on a lotus-leaf, the soul, too, is *in* the world, but not *of* it. Compare that well-known sloka in the Gītā :—

'Duhkheṣvanudvignamanāḥ
sukheṣu vigataspṛhaḥ
Vītarāga-bhaya-krodhaḥ
sthita dhīr munir ucyaté'

'Unperturbed by sorrows great,
Unattached to pleasure's balm.
Free from greed, fear, anger,
Such is a '*Muni*', whose mind is Calm'
(*Gītā* 2. 56)

Such a sublime calmness is 'patience'.

Thirdly, what does 'Unselfishness' imply? It implies giving up the narrow egoity (*Ahamkāra*) and realizing the universal Selfhood (*Ātman*). If the Self, the Soul, the Spirit be seen in this way, then, evidently, there cannot be any hatred, any fear, any suspicion of any kind whatsoever, in any case at all. Think of that inspiring *Mantra* of the celebrated Īśa-Upaniṣad :

'Yastu sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmanyevānupaśyatl
Sarva bhūtéṣu cātmānam tato na vijugupsaté'

'He who sees all things around
In the Self, without dread,
And the Self in all things around
Is free from all hatred'.
(Īśa. 6.)

Such a supreme realization that '*sarvam khalvidam Brahma*' (Chand. Up. 3. 14. 1.), that the whole universe is *Brahman* or the Absolute, is 'unselfishness'.

Fourthly, what does '*Strength*' imply? It implies not at all brute force, not merely physical prowess, but the strength of the Spirit, that which comes, as Swamiji beautifully points out 'through touching the feet of God'. How inspiringly does the Upaniṣad assert — '*Nāyamātma balahīnena Labhyaḥ*' (*Mund. Up.* 3. 2. 4)

'Never is the Self attained
By one who is weak'

'Strength' — this is indeed, the central theme of Swamiji's sublime Philosophy of Life. Thunderingly he gives a clarion call to all :

'All power is within you; you can do anything and everything. Believe in that; do not believe that you are weak; do not believe that you are half-crazy lunatics, as most of us believe nowadays. You can do anything and everything, even without the guidance of any one. All power is there. Stand up and express the Divinity within you'.[13]

Again :

'Know that every thought and word that weakens you in the world, is the only evil that exists. Whatever makes a man weak and fear, is the only evil that should be shunned.'[14]

Take again his saying :

'Our first duty is not to hate ourselves; because, to advance, we must have faith in ourselves first; then, in God. He who has no faith in himself, can never have faith in God'.[15]

Thus, '*Strength*' means such a supreme self-faith, self-reliance, self-effort.

[13] III. 284.
[14] II. 236.
[15] I. 36.

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Fifthly, what does '*Spirituality*' imply? It implies, in the most literal sense, Doctrine of the Spirit. So, it stands for the fullest manifestation of the real Spirit, the eternal Soul, the pure Self in us; or, in one word, the God in us. This belief in the inner, essential Divinity of each and every one of us, constitutes, in fact, the very basis of his sublime System. Time and again, untiringly, he calls upon us all to realize, without any further delay, this supreme fact that we, from the highest to the lowest, are all equally divine in nature. With firm faith he asserts thus repeatedly:

> 'Therefore, know that thou art He, thou art the God of the Universe. . . . You are the Self, the God of the universe. . . . You are all God. . . . You are the Soul of the Universe. You are the sun, the moon, and the stars; it is you who are shining everywhere. The whole universe are you. Whom are you going to hate or fight? Know, then, thou art He and model your life accordingly'.[16]

[16] III. 256.

Thus, women, also, according to Swamiji, have to model their lives in this way, and realize their own essential Divinity fully. As a true Advaita-Vedantist, Swamiji makes no distinction between a man and a woman, and, recommends the very same goal, as well as the very same means, for all equally, viz. the goal of realizing our essential Godhead; and the means of Knowledge-Devotion-Selfless Service. Hence, he gives us a perfectly wonderful 'Motto' of Life:

> 'First, let us be Gods, and then, help others to be Gods. "Be and Make" — Let this be our motto'.[17]

What greater destiny can there be for any one; what loftier goal?

[17] IV. 297.

Roman and Arabic figures in the footnotes refer to the Volume and page numbers respectively of the *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, except where otherwise stated.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA, ART AND MOKSHA

E. R. MAROZZI

[Mr E. R. Marozzi, M.A., from Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A., has been in close association with the Ramakrishna Vivekananda movement. His interest being Art, he depicts here this aspect of Swamiji's personality and his views on Art in an interesting way. — *Ed.*]

Of man's ends, as classified by Hindu tradition are *dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kāma* (love or desire) and *moksha* (liberation) —the first three are meant to be intermediary goals which are to lead to the fourth as the final goal. Only thus do they have any significance; for man's actions if not pointed to moksha are but an endless treadmill of cause-effect sequences. Art as art is also a subsidiary goal and its meaning likewise depends upon its being oriented to moksha.

As an artist, writing about Swami Vivekananda in relation to art, the first thought is that the greatest of arts is life itself, for it is the culmination of all arts, and the perfection of it means moksha, and the product is the *jīvanmukta*, one of the greatest of whom was Swamiji. This is an art in which the objective is the goal of life and the product is also the same goal, for here the doer and the achievement become one — the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman.

In the days of classical Indian art — the Medieval era when the aesthetic texts *Sāhitya Darpaṇa* and *Śukranītisāra* were written — the practice of art, training and disciplines were oriented so as to lead to moksha. The artist was called variously *sādhaka*, *mantrin*, or *yogin*. As in the case of the worshipper, he

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recites the mantra describing the Deity and forms a corresponding mental picture, but instead of making offerings he proceeds to represent it in visible objective form. 'The artist, after ceremonial purification is to proceed to a solitary place. There he is to perform the "sevenfold" office beginning with the invocation and offerings. Then he must realize the four infinite moods — friendliness, compassion, sympathy, and impartiality. Then he must meditate on *sūnyatā* for the removal of his ego-consciousness, then he is to invoke the desired divinity. By reciting the *bīja mantra* and by meditation he should identify himself with the object represented. Finally, with the pronouncing of the *dhyāna mantra* the divinity appears "like a reflection" or "as in a dream"—this image is then the artist's model.'[1] In time this practice would lead to moksha as an end, the practice of art being the means.

Art is the result of the combination of artist-at-work, the medium, the instruments or tools, and the purpose or goal. Whereas the artist and sculptor have their material media and their brushes and chisels as tools, the musical composer has sound as his medium and musical instruments as his tools, the dancer has bodily motion as his medium and his body as a tool, the poet has words as his medium and writing instrument as his tool, and the goal in each case is to embody, express, and convey the aesthetic or spiritual experience of the artist; the greatest of arts would need the most perfected, awakened, and evolved artist, the purest (most valuable) medium, the most efficient tools and instruments, and the Ultimate Truth, the Absolutely Real as the goal. The most fully evolved and spiritually awakened man would be the illumined soul, the man of spiritual realization such as Swamiji — he is the greatest artist; the most valuable medium is the embodied soul (i.e. life itself); the instrument is the human mind; and the goal is Turiya — the fourth state of full awakening, the realization of the Upaniṣadic Truth *Tat Tvam Asi* — the identity of the individual soul and the Absolute Reality. This is characterized by the term *Sat-Chit-Ānanda* — Truth-Consciousness-Bliss (or Beauty). As John Keats states in his *Endymion*, 'Truth is beauty, beauty truth' — it is a unitary experience, for here the artist and the art become one, likewise the medium (jīva), instrument (mind), and goal merge into That — the Ultimate Reality which is One only though it manifests itself as many, the universe. In speaking of the aesthetic experience A. Coomaraswamy said that it is the temporary perception of the Oneness that underlies the universe, or as William Blake expressed this state:

> To see the world in a grain of sand,
> And heaven in a wildflower.
> To hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
> And eternity in an hour.

How is the product of such a transcendent art to be recognized? Only one of equal calibre can fully appreciate such a one, but the Bhagavad Gītā gives us some external signs: 'He who hates no creature, and is friendly and compassionate towards all, who is free from the feelings of "I and mine", even-minded in pain and pleasure, forbearing, ever content . . . whose mind is not shaken by adversity, who does not hanker after happiness, who is free from affection, fear, and wrath, who is everywhere unattached, who casts away all desires of the mind and is not pleased at receiving good nor vexed at receiving evil'. But that which causes this state and inspires the artist's creation is not to be seen with the eyes nor heard with the ears. It is this, instead, by means of which something is seen, heard, or known. 'That by which a man cognizes form, taste, smell, sound, and sense-contacts . . . this is verily That (Reality).'[2] 'That which the eyes cannot see but by means of which the eyes see, know that alone as Brahman. That which the ears cannot hear but by which hearing is perceived, know that alone as Brahman. That which the mind cannot know but by means of which the mind is known, know that alone

[1] Foucher, A. *Iconographie Bouddhique* pp. 8-11.

[2] Katha Upanishad II. 3.

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as Brahman. It is the ear of the ear, the mind of the mind, the speech of speech, the life of life, the eye of the eye. Different it is from the known and it is beyond the unknown as well.'[3]

From the standpoint of the personal God the goal of this kind of art is a state of identity with or nearness to the personal Ideal in a relationship of love. God is here the Ānanda — the ultimate aesthetic object and the beloved. Thus by this kind of art is achieved the complete fulfilment of all man's desires as expressed by the term Sat-Chit-Ānanda. In this Swamiji was indeed the paragon of artists.

The effect and influence of such an artist-jñāni on mankind and the world at large is clearly seen in the life of Swamiji. The dominant role he played at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago and the influence he had subsequently on the men and women of America and the world by his lectures, classes, teachings, and by his personality are facts of recorded history. Of course, he was a very special kind of jñāni. His Master called him a 'Thousand-petalled lotus' in comparison to whom other jñānis of the time were ten, sixteen, or at the most one hundred petals. To quote Sister Christine, a disciple of Swamiji from Detroit:

> 'Such a being is beyond all comparison, for he transcends all ordinary standards and ideals. Others may be brilliant, his mind is luminous, for he has the power to put himself into immediate contact with the source of all knowledge . . . He was in a class by himself. He belonged to another order. He was not of this world. He was a radiant being who had descended from another, higher sphere for a definite purpose . . . Is it to be wondered at that nature itself rejoices in such a birth, that the heavens open and angels sing paeans of praise. Blessed is the country in which he was born, blessed are they who lived on this earth at the same time, and blessed, thrice blessed are those who sat at his feet.'[4]

The profound influence he had on the lives of those who met him and knew him and especially the wholesale transformation in the lives of his disciples cannot be delineated here and have been fully told by the disciples themselves in some instances, such as Sister Nivedita and Sister Christine, and by others in the work *Swami Vivekananda in America* by Marie Louise Burke — wherein details of Swamiji's life in America, his influence on groups and individuals are well presented — the data having been gleaned from various newspaper items and letters — and in *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda* published by Advaita Ashrama wherein various disciples and friends relate their experiences with Swamiji. To these we refer the reader. One instance we would like to cite from the latter work because of its unique character. It is told by Madame Calve, the famous singer:

> 'One day we lost our way in Cairo, I suppose we had been talking too intently . . . We found ourselves in a squalid, ill-smelling street, where half-clad women lolled from windows and sprawled on doorsteps. The Swami noticed nothing until a particularly noisy group of women in the shadow of a dilapidated building began laughing and calling to him. One of the ladies of our party tried to hurry us along, but the Swami detached himself gently from our group and approached the women on the bench.
>
> "Poor children!" he said. "Poor creatures! They have put their divinity in their beauty. Look at them now!"
>
> He began to weep. The women were silenced and abashed. One of them leaned forward and kissed the hem of the robe, murmuring brokenly in Spanish, "Humbre de Dios, humbre de Dios!" (Man of God!) Another, with a sudden gesture of modesty and fear, threw her arm in front of her face as though she would screen her shrinking soul from those pure eyes.'[5]

II

As to what the Great Swami said about this art of life or art of moksha is told in the set of eight volumes of his *Complete Works*. What he said about art in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term — in its traditional sense — we shall discuss here. In keeping with the above ideas and giving a sort of definition of art, he said:

[3] Kena Upanishad I. 2-7.
[4] *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 152.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 269

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'The growth of man can only be gauged by his power of living in the higher atmosphere where the senses are left behind, the amount of pure thought-oxygen his lungs can breathe in, and the amount of time he can spend on that height— . . . Even luxuries are arranged according to ideas and ideals, to make them reflect as much of thought-life as possible — and this is art.' [6]

Is art imitation of natural forms, as Plato thought, or is nature imitating art, as Oscar Wilde thought? Or, is art something totally other than physical nature, as contemporary non-objective artists are inclined to think? These have been crucial problems for the art aesthete and the artist throughout the ages. Since the invention of the photographic camera these questions have come into prominence and the rebellion against photographic verisimilitude led to impressionistic and post-impressionistic movements in art followed by the non-objective and art-by-accident movements of today. The artist was thus called upon to prove both to himself and the world that art was not imitation or representation of nature but something inner — more profound and more significant. Swamiji had his own answer — complete and to the point :

'True art can be compared to a lily which springs from the ground, and yet is quite above it. So art must be in touch with nature — and wherever that touch is gone, art degenerates — yet it must be above nature.' [7]

He criticizes the standpoint of mere imitation :

'The secret of Greek art is its imitation of Nature even to the minutest details; whereas the secret of Indian art is to represent the ideal. The energy of the Greek painter is spent in perhaps painting a piece of flesh, and he is so successful that a dog is deluded into taking it to be a real bit of meat and so goes to bite it. Now, what glory is there in merely imitating Nature? Why not place an actual bit of flesh before the dog?' [8]

'The difference between Greek art and the art of other countries consists in this that the former faithfully delineates the living phenomena of natural life . . . The work of this school was to completely divorce art from religion and keep it restricted to the delineation of merely human life.' [9]

Asked about the difference between art of the East and the West he said :

'It is nearly the same everywhere. Originality is rarely to be found. In those countries (West) pictures are painted with the help of models obtained by photographing various objects. But no sooner does one take the help of machinery than all originality vanishes — one cannot give expression to one's ideas. The ancient artists used to evolve original ideas from their brains and try to express them in their paintings.' [10]

Just as he did not approve of mere imitation of nature he did not approve of art without content such as is prevalent in the galleries of today :

'Art has its origin in the expression of some idea in whatever man produces. Where there is no expression of idea, however much there may be a display of colours and so on, it cannot be styled true art.' [11]

'In the Paris exhibition I saw a wonderful figure carved in marble. In explanation of the figure, the following words were inscribed underneath : "Art unveiling Nature—that is, how Art sees the inner beauty of Nature by drawing away with its own hands the covering veils." The work has been so designed as to indicate that the beauty of Nature has not yet become fully unveiled; but the artist is fascinated, as it were, with the beauty of the little that has become manifest. One cannot refrain from praising the sculptor who has tried to express this exquisite idea.' [12]

Thus the greatest art would be to Swamiji that art which expressed the greatest ideas. So the Art of India gained his highest admiration for this reason :

'People who are very materialistic take nature as their ideal, and try to express in art ideas allied thereto. While the people whose ideal is the transcendent Reality beyond Nature, try to express that in art through the powers of Nature. With regard to the former class of people, Nature is the

[6] *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, IV. 230.
[7] *Ibid.*, V. 186.
[8] *Ibid.*, V. 185.
[9] *Ibid.*, VII. 384.
[10] *Ibid.*, VII. 199-204.
[11] *Ibid.*
[12] *Ibid.*

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primary basis of art, while with the second class, ideality is the principal motive of artistic development. Seeing some paintings in the West you will mistake them for real objects. With respect to this country (India), when in ancient times sculpture attained a high degree of perfection, if you look at a statue of the period it will make you forget the material world and transport you to a new ideal world.'[13]

'I had the opportunity of seeing the beauties of art of nearly every civilized country in the world, but I saw nothing like the development of art which took place in our country during the Buddhist period, (as also) during the regime of the Moghul Emperors.'[14]

'Their (West's) ideal is utility, ours art . . . Have you seen the granaries for keeping paddy? What an art is there in them! What a variety of paintings even on their mud walls! And then, if you go and see how the lower classes live in the West, you would at once mark the difference.'[15]

'The very soul of the Asiatic is interwoven with art. The Asiatic never uses a thing unless there be art in it. Don't you know that art is, with us, a part of religion? How greatly a lady is admired among us, who can nicely paint the floors and the walls, on auspicious occasions, with the paste of rice powder? How great an artist was Sri Ramakrishna himself!'[16]

After having had a brilliant discourse on art with Ranada Babu, expert artist and a learned man, it was remarked how the artist was astonished to hear his words, whereupon Swamiji began to hum the lines of a song, 'The controlled mind is a great treasure, the philosopher's stone, which can yield you whatever you want.'

III

It would be interesting at this point to note by way of comparison how one of the great spiritual giants of the West, Meister Eckhart, speaks of art. The close similarity in ideas between Meister Eckhart and Śankara has been shown by Rudolph Otto in his book *Mysticism East and West*. Meister Eckhart's remarks on art are sometimes in connection with pointing out some spiritual truth by way of analogy.

On the meaning of art he says:

'So much of pure aesthetic experience as is possible to anyone is his guarantee of ultimate perfect happiness. It is as artist-scholar (jnani) that man prepares all things to return to God, in-so-far-as he sees them ideally and not merely sensibly.'

On this universe being God's artistic creation and all forms being within His mind:

'All creatures in their pre-existing forms in God have been divine life forever . . . They live in the Divine Mind — the hoard which is God's art.'

Therefore the artist, seeking content for his art, finds these forms within:

'Intellect is the temple of God wherein he is shining in all his glory. Nowhere does God dwell more really than in this temple of his intellect's nature.'

'There is a power in the soul called mind: it is her storehouse of incorporeal forms and intellectual notions.'

'To be properly expressed a thing must proceed from within, moved by its form; it must come, not in from without, but out from within.'

'The most trivial thing perceived in God, a flower for example as espied in God (*svarūpa*) would be a thing more perfect than the universe. It is as an artist, seeing rationally and formally, that man sees things in their perfection . . . as far as his idiosyncrasy permits — as far as the recipient will allow.'

'What is doing Conrad to life? Not making something that could be mistaken for the man himself, but making the very image of him, that is, as far as lies in the painter's power, his express image as it exists reflected in the mirror of God's essence.'

About art as imitation of natural forms he says:

'To find nature herself all her likenesses have to be shattered and the further in, the nearer the actual thing.'

'An art made as far as possible according to the eye's intrinsic faculty and merely for the eye can be thought of only as a superimposition of illusion on illusion.'

[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] *Ibid.*, V. 288.
[16] *Ibid.*

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'If I paint my likeness on the wall, he who sees the likeness is not seeing me; but anyone who sees me sees my likeness and not my likeness merely but my child. If I really knew my soul, anyone who saw my conception of it would say it was my son, for I would share therewith my energy and nature, and as here so it is in the Godhead.'

'God is nameless and there is no knowing him by likeness . . . a portrait of the highest seraph limned in black would be a better likeness far than God portrayed as the highest seraph that were a pre-eminent unlikeness.'

On the objective of the artist's work Meister Eckhart says :

'Working is not for the sake of or to display skill, but to serve and praise the first cause of the work, that is the subject imaged in the artist's mind without idea of ownership. It is working for the love of God in any case, because the perfection of the work is to prepare all creatures to return to God.'

'If by reason of his skill he gets a good report in the world, that is to be taken as the gift of God, not as his due who should work as though no one existed.' [17]

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, commenting and interpreting Meister Eckhart's philosophy of art says :

'Could the artist . . . attain perfection, becoming one with God, he would share in God's creation from time everlasting, natural species would be his image in time as they are God's, nothing would remain but the ever-present world-picture as God sees it. There would be no occasion for works of art, the end of art having been accomplished.' [18]

Having reached this point of development, the artist-jñāni may no longer create something outer as a production for he has achieved the end — goal of creation, the perfect Self. What was important all along in his development was not so much the perfection of the outer thing but what was happening to himself so that in the end he found that the perfection which he was at first seeking outside he found within himself. Now action may cease, for he has reached the fulfilment of all action in himself — doing is no longer necessary for he has achieved perfection in Being which is the end-goal of all action.

Sankara says in *Vivekachudamani* :

'By this Samadhi are destroyed all desires, which are like knots, all work is at an end and inside and outside there takes place everywhere and always the spontaneous manifestation of one's Real Nature.' [19]

So Swamiji, in speaking to an artist said :

'Whoever works at a thing heart and soul, not only achieves success in it, but through his absorption in that he also realizes the Supreme Truth—Brahman.' [20]

[17] *Meister Eckhart* tr. by C. de B. Evans.

[18] *Transformation of Nature in Art*, p. 81.

[19] *Vivekachudamani*, 363.

[20] *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, VII. 200.

To those who have heard much of the personal appearance of the Swami Vivekananda, it may seem strange that it was not this which made the first outstanding impression. The forceful virile figure which stepped upon the platform was unlike the emaciated, ascetic type which is generally associated with spirituality in the West. A sickly saint everyone understands, but who ever heard of a powerful saint? The power that emanated from this mysterious being was so great that one all but shrank from it. It was overwhelming. It threatened to sweep everything before it. This one sensed even in those first unforgettable moments. Later we were to see this power at work. It was the mind that made the first great appeal, that amazing mind! What can one say that will give even a faint idea of its majesty, its glory, its splendour? It was a mind so far transcending other minds, even of those who rank as geniuses, that it seemed different in its very nature.

—SISTER CHRISTINE

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SWAMIJI AND THE CORE VALUES OF OUR CULTURE

P. S. NAIDU

[Prof. P. S. Naidu, formerly Professor of Psychology in the Allahabad University is presently Hony. Professor, University Grants Commission, in the Women's Training College, Agra. His contact with the mission has been very intimate, and he has been a regular contributor to the *Vedanta Kesari*. In this article he succinctly posits the core values of our culture and Swamiji's contribution to it beautifully. — *Ed.*]

When a devoted Christian is asked 'What is Christianity?', he is ready with a telling answer, 'Christianity is Christ; Christ is Christianity.' Those who are simple and pure hearted in any religion, see the essence of their faith in the life and teachings of their prophets. These founders of religion lived what they preached. Their life was a concrete embodiment of the deepest values and convictions of the faith they established. When we who belong to the Hindu faith, are asked 'What is Hinduism?' we are inclined to enter into a long discourse on the fundamentals of our religion. This is eminently justifiable. Ours is Sanātana Dharma, and it is better to lay stress on the timeless and the immortal in it. But, for the simple, ordinary folk, and also for those who have no taste for abstract concepts — and they are many among the intellectuals — our answer to the question 'What is Hinduism?' should be simple. My answer, without the least hesitation is, 'Ramakrishna-Vivekananda' is Hinduism; Sri Guru Maharaj is the meditative and contemplative aspect of Hinduism; the dynamic, active aspect being Swamiji. In their lives, — it was in fact one life — we see Hinduism in its purest form, embodying the loftiest ideals and values of our religion. The teachings of the Bhagavad Gītā, the quintessence of the Upaniṣads, the lofty aspirations of the Vedas, the paths prescribed in the Darşanas for realizing the sublime goal of life, the ideals of dharma found in our purāṇas — these and many other values — have been distilled, and the resulting elixir presented to us by Sri Guru Maharaj and Swamiji. So, with full conviction we may say 'Hinduism is Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda'.

In this article, I propose to indicate how Swamiji's life and teachings uncover for us the core values of Hinduism and Indian culture, values which may not be easily seen, and in consequence, do not grip our lives as they should. Swamiji's life was deeply motivated by profound *compassion* for the masses. Their ignorance and their suffering stirred his feelings to their very depths. He preached service and demonstrated by shining example what form this service should take. It should be worship of the divine in every human being, however humble or lowly his status be. It is this recognition of the Divinity in each man, woman or child that constitutes the first and foremost value in Indian Culture. The Mahavākyas of the Upaniṣads were the guiding stars of Swamiji's life on this earth.

Who does not recall with thrill the thundering utterances of Swamiji, 'Arise, Awake, Stop not, till the goal is reached!' And what is the goal? *Self-realization* is that goal. Since Divinity is latent in each individual, it is every one's duty to blow that spark into a blazing fire.

This great value of our culture, namely, self-realization as the only worth-while goal of life, has been stressed by Swamiji in his talks on Education. 'Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man'. The light divine within is obscured in most people. It is like a lamp in a cask of iron, no gleam of light can shine through. Gradually, by purity and unselfishness, we can make the obscuring medium less and less dense, until at last it becomes as transparent as glass.' It is this transformation of the dense iron into crystal clear glass that is enjoined by our culture as the highest aim of life and Swamiji

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has given new currency to it in the field of education.

An incident in Swamiji's life, when the Master was ill at Shyampukur, brings out another outstanding feature of our culture. The sentimentality of the devotees had reached a climax at Shyampukur. Several of them would fall into partial trances accompanied by contortions of the body whenever there would be devotional music. Swamiji was quick enough to forsee the dangers of such meaningless emotion. He addressed himself first to the young men. He would argue with them, advise them to practise control of emotions and sentiments and take nourishing food. And when he was convinced that in some the trance was the result of physical weakness, he even recommended the help of a physician. There is a profound lesson here to be learnt by those who seek self-realization. We are body and spirit. The body must be made an ally of the spirit in the latter's struggle for release. It should not hinder the spirit, so it should be kept in fit condition. It should be fed and clothed and tended with care. But all this should be done with the sole aim of making the body a fit enough Shrine, a pure enough tabernacle for the Mother to reside therein. Sri Guru Maharaj, on many occasions, emphasized the point, that it is not what you eat, or what you put on that matters, but what your mind is concentrated on.

Swamiji was himself a student of science, and during his academic career had mastered many branches of science. Later, when he was organizing the first sacred order of monks, he used to speak to the young Sadhus, with great erudition and skill. Not infrequently did he declare that the East should get its knowledge of science and skill in Technology from the West and that the latter should come to us for spiritual discipline. All this information is commonplace for those who have even a nodding acquaintance with Swamiji's biography. But there is a profound secret hidden behind this. Let us lift the veil a little and take just a glance at the beauty of the great idea (in fact it is a great ideal) behind it.

Science and technology demand exploitation of the material resources hidden in the bosom of the earth. So severe is the exploitation in, what are called, advanced countries, that the earth is getting gradually denuded. Now, perhaps what Swamiji had in mind was this: While the resources of the earth should be utilized for the welfare of man, yet the manner of utilization should be in conformity with the great ideals of our culture. Our culture calls upon us to treat the earth as Mother Earth. Just as the infant draws gently the life-giving milk from the bosom of his mother to the extent he needs it, no more and no less, so man is to draw his material requirements from Mother Earth to the extent that is good for him. Man has no right to *exploit* Mother Earth, and he will be less than human if he tries to enslave her. Thus, the Earth, the primary source of material wealth is endowed with sanctity in our culture. This, I am sure, is what Swamiji teaches us.

Even the hardened atheist will melt into tears when he witnesses the sweetness of the relationship between Swamiji and Sri Guru Maharaj. One has only to read that little brochure 'My Master', to see how tender was the relation between Master and Disciple. It was a shining example of true Guru Bhakti in the most exalted sense. *Reverence* in the purest sense was shown by Swamiji to Bhagavan Paramahamsa Deva. It was the great psychologist William Mcdougall who analyzed Reverence into wonder, self-submission, a touch of fear, and above all parental love.

Reverence results in Humility. The entire life of Swamiji, ever since he met his 'Master', and *accepted* him as 'Master' was inspired by *humility* towards Him who made God real in this very life. Perhaps we may catch a glimpse of the value of humility if we see what Swamiji has recorded about his own Master: 'And he then set about to learn humility, because he had found that the one idea in all religions is "not me but thou" and he who says "not me", the Lord fills his heart.

'... The Pariahs ... are a set of people so low that some of our books say, that if a

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Brahmana coming out from his house sees the face of a Pariah, he has to fast that day and recite certain prayers ... By birth Brahmana stands for holiness, and the Pariah for the very reverse. And this Brahmana (Sri Paramahamsa Deva) asked to be allowed to do the menial services in the house of the Pariah. The Pariah of course could not allow that ... So, in the dead of night, when all were sleeping, Ramakrishna would enter the house. He had long hair, and with his hair, he would wipe the place, saying, "O my Mother, make me the servant of the Pariah, make me feel that I am even lower than the pariah."' (*My Master*, pages 41 and 42).

Aristocratic in intellect, in bearing, in manners, speech and even in body-build, Swamiji was, in the presence of Sri Guru Maharaj, a child. A master of the then dominant rationalistic school of thought, he acknowledged in the presence of his Master, the limitations of reason, and the superiority of intuition. Mystic experience was a living force with Swamiji all his life.

'Isn't it wonderful that Narendra has accepted Mother?' exclaimed Sri Paramahamsa Deva after a night of deeply touching experiences in the Temple of Mother. How revealing is the attitude of Swamiji to *Mother*, the mother who gave birth to him, the Holy Mother whom he served and the Universal Mother Kali. In our scale of values the Mother occupies the top-most place. Mother first, Father next, and Teacher next—that is the order in which children are asked to pay their respects to their elders. So great is our veneration for Motherhood that we worship God as Mother.

One of the most impressive lessons that we learn from the life and teachings of Swamiji is *tolerance*. This feeling arises out of a deep compassion for humanity. It also arises out of a firm conviction that the religions of the world are but various phases of one eternal religion. Swamiji's address to the Parliament of Religions carries the idea forward. The quintessence of Tolerance is contained in the following words of Swamiji: 'I do not understand how people declare themselves to be believers in God, and at the same time think that God has handed over to *a little body of men all truth*, and that they are guardians of the rest of humanity. ... Do not try to disturb the faith of any man... if you can get hold of a man where he stands and give him a push upwards, do so, but do not destroy what he has.' (*My Master*, p. 56).

Let me quote myself, 'Since every one is an embodiment of the divine essence, it is demanded of each one of us that we make an attempt to see the world as others see it, to try and feel as they feel, and understand and appreciate their view of life and their way of life. Having discharged these obligations we have to come back to our position with re-doubled strength and heightened conviction, but with an added sense of humility. This is true Tolerance.' It does not contain, as an ingredient, the patronage which a person who believes himself superior, bestows on another of a supposedly inferior culture.

It is not synonymous with the attitude of co-existence. It springs out of a sincere appreciation of another's faith by one who is certain of one's own. Such Tolerance is dynamic, and is the only foundation for peace and goodwill on earth, because it arises not only out of a deep realization of the brotherhood of man, but of a deeper realization of the Motherhood of God.

Man as the embodiment of the Divine, sacredness of the human body, sanctity of Guru-Sishya relationship, utilization of wealth in a spirit of detachment, Reverence for elders, exercise of Tolerance, and use of reason in due subordination to Faith — these are the basic values of our Culture that we learn from Swamiji.

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Swami Vivekananda at Thousand Island Park (1895)

'Never approach anything except as God ; for if we do, we see evil, because we throw a veil of delusion over what we look at and then we see evil. Get free from these illusions ; be blessed.'

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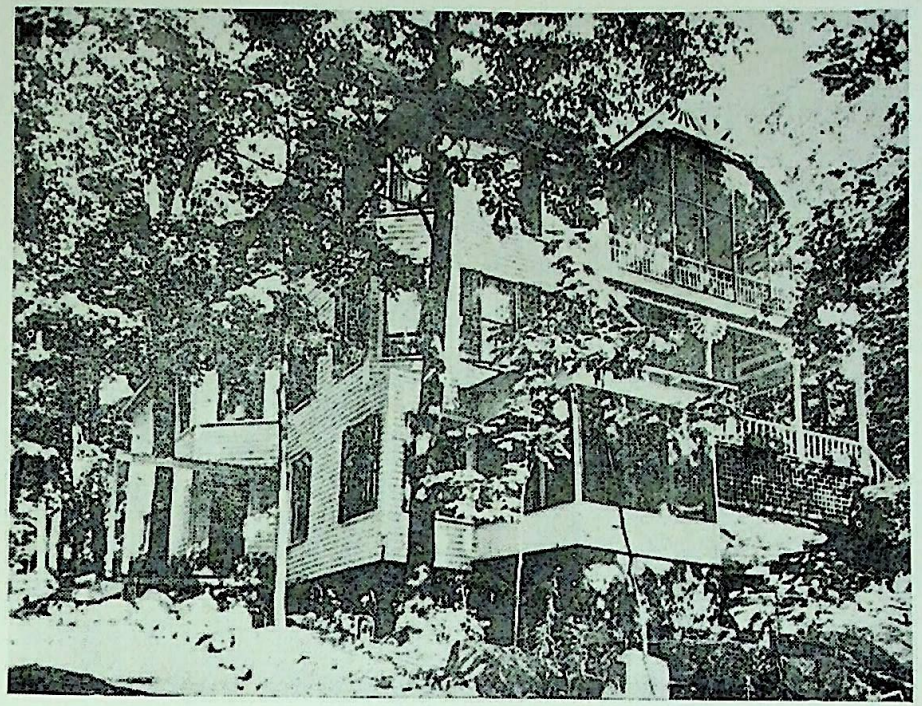
MISS M. ELIZABETH DUTCHER
(First owner of the Cottage at Thousand Island Park now named after Swamiji—see page 252)



Vivekananda Cottage at Thousand Island Park, New York

[*Courtesy* : Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York]

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HISTORICAL SKETCH OF VIVEKANANDA COTTAGE AT THOUSAND ISLAND PARK, NEW YORK

MALCOLM WILLIS

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It was at Thousand Island Park, New York, that Swami Vivekananda did some of his most important American work. Here he trained his greatest American disciple, Sister Christine. Here the plans for his work in India began to take form in his mind. He experienced, on the banks of the St. Lawrence, the *Nirvikalpa Samādhi*, as in the days at Cossipore. Here he wrote his poem, *The Song of the Sannyasin*, and he gave the teaching that has come down to us as *Inspired Talks*.

The Thousand Islands

The Thousand Islands (of which there are actually upwards of seventeen hundred), dotting the St. Lawrence River, which flows northward from the Great Lakes to Quebec where it empties into the Atlantic, were formed during the Glacial Period. Even now one notices how that great glacier scraped down to the very bones of the earth, for there are many exposed rocks on these islands, and such rocks are very much in evidence behind the house where Swami Vivekananda stayed. So beautiful was the natural scenery of the Thousand Islands that, from time immemorial, the Red Indians brought their dead here for burial. They called the place the Garden of the Great Spirit.

The St. Lawrence River was discovered for Europeans by Jacques Cartier, a Frenchman, in 1535. It was not, however, explored until 1615, when Samuel de Champlain found the Iroquois and the Algonquins, two Indian tribes, engaged in a war of extermination. The French espousal of the cause of the Algonquins earned for them the deadly hatred of the Iroquois, and this hatred was one of the inciting causes of the French and Indian War.

In 1778 the Oneidas, another Indian tribe who had in the meantime come into possession of it, ceded this region to New York State. The first white settlers, who established themselves on Carleton Island, were the so-called 'lumber-thieves', who simply helped themselves to the apparently inexhaustible supply of fine timber. In 1801 came a settlement of trappers, fishermen and hunters. By 1806 squatters had begun to clear and till the soil.

Beginning with the Embargo and Non-Intercourse Period of 1807-1808 and continuing until after the War of 1812, smugglers ruled the river and the islands. They grew rich importing liquors and goods of all kinds from Canada and exporting potash in great quantity. The French Road between Lyons Falls and Clayton was built in 1808, and this new route made the illegal trading easier and more profitable. As for the river, they used boats in summer and the natural bridge of ice in the winter.

After the War of 1812 a law-abiding spirit gradually developed and the young settlements

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NOTE: The materials on the history of the Thousand Islands I have taken almost verbatim from *The Thousand Islands* by Margaret McCormick Lantier (Saranac, N.Y. 1960). The material on Miss Mary Elizabeth Dutcher I have gleaned mostly from talking to elderly people who remembered her: Miss Margaret Otis, Ph.D., Mrs. Frances Fox, Mrs. May Cuppernall, Mr. Thomas Mitchell, Sr., Mrs. Emerson Cox. Mr. and Mrs. Chester Carlson did valuable research on her study in New York City and her teaching in Rochester. Swami Nikhilananda noted step by step the proceedings of the purchase and restoration of the house. — *Author.*

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in the Islands region settled down to the serious pursuit of the lumbering business. Great rafts of logs were floated down the river to Montreal. Ship-building, begun in 1832, grew into an art as well as a great industry.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century it became the custom for certain Christian sects to hold 'revival' meetings on various of the Thousand Islands. As some one has remarked, humorously, 'each sect had its island and each island its sect.' People came and camped for months at a time singing, praying and listening to sermons. They hardly knew where religion ended and recreation began, so intense they were.

Wellesley Island, the second largest of the Thousand Islands group, 9 miles long, 4 miles wide, was dedicated to the sect called Methodist. Thousand Island Park, founded about 1850, at the southern tip of the island, was destined to have the cottage, built by Miss Dutcher, to which Swami Vivekananda came in 1895.

Miss M. Elizabeth Dutcher

Miss Mary Elizabeth Dutcher, the daughter of a poor farmer, was born about 1832 near Oswego, New York.

One imagines that she lived the life of a rural farm girl, with the difference that she was intensely interested in painting, and no doubt stood out from her companions by her unusual observations and perceptions. At any rate, she eventually had the means to go to New York City and to study art at the Art Students' League under William Chase. She was also a pupil at the Academy of Design. After her student days she settled in Rochester, New York, where she taught art. She was interviewed at her studio at 8 Chestnut Street in January 1881. The author of the article, which appeared in the *Democrat & Chronicle*, quotes her as saying, 'I prefer to call this my workroom rather than dignify it with the name of studio.'

Two of her paintings are now in the Thousand Island Park Cottage, and they definitely show the influence of French Impressionism. It is important to note this, because it shows that she was alive to current trends. Impressionism was the 'modern art' of the day, and because she was aware of it she could also be aware of the revolutionary ideas of Swami Vivekananda. There was an exhibition of her works at the Rochester Art Club in May 1883.

One gathers that she divided her time between Rochester and New York City. Certainly she was in New York during the winter of 1894-1895, when she heard and met Vivekananda.

She was apparently a colourful personality. Tom Mitchell, an aged carpenter of Thousand Island Park, who as a boy helped to build the wing on her cottage that she made for Swamiji, tells how she had a sort of harmless fly-trap which she took into the woods each evening to let out the flies which had become imprisoned in it during the day. Mrs. Cuppernall, former postmistress, recalls her hats bright with flowers, and adds that she was 'eccentric but very good.' There is a story that she preferred to choose a drunkard to paint her cottage in the hope that she might be able to reform him. That drunkard, incidentally, still unreformed, lived in the basement of her cottage years after she had died, as a sort of caretaker.

Miss Dutcher's contact with Swami Vivekananda shook her to the very roots of her being. One recalls the morning during the summer of 1895 when the Swami was inveighing against duty. Miss Dutcher began, 'But Swami, is it not our duty . . .' and got no farther, for Vivekananda burst forth with words meant to uproot this conception from her mind. Miss Dutcher, Miss Waldo tells us, was not seen for some days. But in the end, her relationship with the great teacher served only to make her adopt a more liberal form of Christianity. A Methodist before her meeting with Swami Vivekananda, she subsequently became a Christian Scientist. She had developed a tumour and a Christian Scientist said to her, 'If I cure you, will you become a Christian Scientist?' Miss Dutcher

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answered affirmatively, she was cured, and she kept her word. Strange as this act may seem, it can be explained, for Sister Christine has shown that Miss Dutcher's devotion to Swami Vivekananda was not greater than her adherence to certain conventions and prejudices. After becoming a Christian Scientist Miss Dutcher used her cottage as a sanatorium for people suffering from various ailments. She cooked for them and gave them mental treatments. In this way she met Miss Margaret Otis, who purchased Miss Dutcher's cottage after her death and owned it at the time it was bought by the RamakrishnaVivekananda Center of New York.

The Cottage

Originally a campground, Thousand Island Park slowly became a village of cottages, many of them built upon what had at first been only foundations for tents. Consequently the houses are overcrowded together. The usual type is two rooms below, two above, each floor with its own porch. The roof is peaked. Sometimes rooms are added as needed, or as the family grows.

Miss Dutcher built her cottage at the eastern end of the Park on a rock on the rise of the hill that is behind the village. This location she selected no doubt with the Biblical verse in mind. It was in 1885, and with her were her mother and her sister. She built the prescribed four rooms, the upper two of which were cut up into extremely small cubicles for the accommodation of guests. To the two porches she added a third porch facing roughly south, and subsequently she added a kitchen.

Ten years later, for the convenience of Swami Vivekananda she added a wing on the west side of the house. Because of the steepness of the slope on which the house stands there could be three stories here as opposed to the two on the east. On the third floor was Swamiji's room, one door of which led out on to the upper porch where he gave his evening talks. The room beneath on the second floor was the study in which he gave the morning lessons which Miss Waldo has preserved for us as *Inspired Talks*. The room beneath that was used as a bedroom by one of the students present during the summer of 1895. Miss Dutcher had a staircase built outside the Swami's room so that he might come and go as he liked.

In later years Miss Dutcher added a studio on the second floor, next to the study, and below it still another bedroom.

The Summer of 1895

Swami Vivekananda stayed and taught at Thousand Island Park from June 19 to August 6, 1895. He was in extremely good spirits at this time and was happy to be able to teach such an earnest group of American students. He was in a very passion of renunciation, as his composition at this time of 'The Song of the Sannyasin' shows.

Miss Waldo has stated in the introduction to *Inspired Talks* that twelve disciples followed the Swami from New York. Exactly who those twelve were it seems impossible to reconstruct at this late date. Of those we know there were : Miss Dutcher, Miss Waldo, Mrs. Funke, Miss Christine Greenstidel, Miss Ruth Ellis, Dr. Wight, Mr. Leon Landsberg, an aging actress known only as Stella, and the Frenchwoman, Marie Louise. It is also possible that Dr. Wright, the Harvard professor who was an admirer of the Swami, was there.

Miss Waldo and Mrs. Funke live for us through the lively prefaces they have written for *Inspired Talks*. We know Sister Christine through her journal. Miss Dutcher is vivid to those who have had the opportunity of speaking to people who have known her. But the rest, except in so far as Sister Christine mentions them, have faded into oblivion. Perhaps the other three were sufficiently lacking in colourfulness that Sister Christine did not think to mention them.

It was Christine Greenstidel who became Sister Christine, Leon Landsberg Swami Kripananda, and Marie Louise Swami Abhaya-

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nanda. The latter two defected from the teaching of Swami Vivekananda, though Swami Abhayananda organized at least two Vedanta Centers in America, on the West Coast.

In thinking of this group that followed Swami Vivekananda to Thousand Island Park, it is well to remember a remark of Sister Nivedita's in *The Master as I saw Him*. She says that Swami Vivekananda always saw people larger than they were because he saw through to their utmost possibility of unfoldment — an unfoldment that might take many lives for realization. We must be careful then in judging them, for who can tell what will be the end result of the enormous push which the Swami gave to their spiritual development?

In order to welcome Swami Vivekananda to her cottage Miss Dutcher painted a huge scroll with the words 'Welcome to Swami Vivekananda.' When Swamiji left the islands he said, 'I bless these Thousand Islands.'

In this way he gave to The United States a genuine holy place.

The Interim

After the summer of 1895 Miss Dutcher used the cottage as a studio and as a boarding house. Every summer she gave an exhibition of her work and villagers felt, when leaving, compelled to buy at least one of the modestly priced paintings — for she gave the impression of being terribly poor.

In 1902 Miss Josephine MacLeod, inspired no doubt by Swamiji's death, made a pilgrimage to the cottage (she had not been at the classes), went to the Swami's room, and as the story goes, wept and wept. Other students came, too.

After Miss Dutcher's death in 1922 artists used to rent the house from Miss Margaret Otis, who had bought it. Miss Otis was herself a person of rare charm and force of character; she knew Sanskrit, and it was particularly fitting that her copies of the Rigveda and other Sanskrit works should repose in the house in which Vivekananda stayed. She spent the summers from 1929 to 1933 there. One day, she said, out of nowhere a man appeared at the door. Coming in, he saw a staff hanging in the dining room. 'That is Swami Vivekananda's staff,' he said, 'May I have it?' Miss Otis gave it to him and he disappeared. Could it have been Leon Landsberg? After 1933 Miss Otis left the house because of what she explained as 'ghosts' and went to live in the cottage, 50 yards from Miss Dutcher's, where her brother and two sisters lived.

The house was vacant from 1933 to 1948 except for the tenancy in the basement of the drunken housepainter, Dan Eager.

Rediscovery

In June or July of 1947 Swami Nikhilananda visited the cottage with Mrs. Davidson and two other students. They had found the location through Miss MacLeod, who had put them in touch with Mrs. Emerson Cox, who as a child had been a ward of Miss Dutcher's. George Cox, her son, took the party to the cottage.

They found it in utter disrepair. The boards were giving way on the verandah. An upper porch was caving in and the stairway to it was too rickety to climb. The unfinished inside, painted grey, presented a grim aspect. From the ceiling great strips of wallpaper sadly hung down. One of the main supports holding up the house had rotted away allowing one side of the structure to sink. Swami Vivekananda's room shook underfoot. Debris was everywhere. Not only inside but outside was chaos. The ground around was full of weeds, underbrush, small and big trees.

Swami Nikhilananda felt that though it was worth having seen, it was beyond saving. However, when he wrote to the then President of the Ramakrishna Mission, Swami Virajananda, about it, the latter said that it should be acquired. He added that as it was one of the only true sacred places of pilgrimage in America it should be bought and that if the

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New York Center did not buy it, money would be sent from India. He added that since he could not visit it in this life he would visit it after his death in his subtle body. Mrs. Davidson, too, said that if Swami Nikhilananda did not purchase it, she would.

That same fall Swami Nikhilananda, Swami Ghanananda, Mr. Goodridge, late President of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, Mrs. Davidson and another student visited the cottage and decided to acquire it. Miss Otis was approached in the late fall of 1947. She said the building had been sold for firewood for $500. It was finally arranged that the man who had purchased it should be reimbursed and that Miss Otis should be paid an additional $500. The money for repairs was donated by students and admirers of Swamiji.

The restoration of the cottage began in the early spring of 1948. One of the students came to Thousand Island Park to oversee the work. A student and his son put in all the electric wiring. A group of women students came early in June and fixed curtains, repainted old furniture, purchased necessary articles, planted flowers, etc. The kitchen, which contained the old wood stove used in Swami Vivekananda's time, was modernized. Modern plumbing was installed. The shed-like structure over Miss Dutcher's studio was transformed into a sleeping porch. On the outside of the house the original fluted and scrolled decorations were restored by Tom Mitchell, Sr. who had worked on the original wing added by Miss Dutcher for Swami Vivekananda. The summer of 1950 saw fireplaces added to the study and to the bedroom below it.

The cottage was ready for occupancy by July 1948. Swamis Aseshananda, Satprakashananda, Yatiswarananda, as well as Swami Nikhilananda spent the summer there. Earth from holy places in India was buried outside. Ganges water was poured into the St. Lawrence. Puja and Homa were performed in the garden.

Swamiji's room is used as a chapel. On the floor is the rug which Swami Vivekananda had sent by the Maharaja of Khetri to Mr. and Mrs. Leggett on the occasion of their marriage. After their death the carpet was in Ridgely Manor and it was given for its present use through the kindness of their daughter Mrs. Frances H. Leggett. The room also contains, besides pictures of Swamiji, Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother, the busts of Swamiji and Sri Ramakrishna made by Malvina Hoffman, the distinguished American sculptor.

An interesting sidelight is cast by the fact that the manuscript of *The Song of the Sannyasin* turned up in the trash that was thrown out at the time of the initial renovating of the cottage. This was picked up by the electrician's son, who kept it for seven years. Eventually he gave it to Swami Nikhilananda, who asked him why he had kept it so long. He said he did not know.

Two other cottages at the foot of the hill have been given, one by Mrs. Davidson, the other by another student. Mrs. Davidson called her cottage Sri Sarada Kutir and it houses some of the women devotees during the summer. The other cottage, called Vedanta Cottage, is used by Swami Nikhilananda for his writing.

The summers since the Rediscovery

At first the summers at Vivekananda Cottage were rather informal. Swami Nikhilananda invited certain students to spend the summer or part of it there. Others, through his invitation, stayed at the local hotel. Still others came, informally, to have a look at the house where Swami Vivekananda had stayed in 1895. Each summer students from the various Vedanta Centers in the United States come on pilgrimage to the Cottage.

Since the beginning an Arati service has taken place in the late afternoon. This has always formed, so to speak, the pivot of the day. But from the first also there have been classes, at least in embryo. Originally simply evening readings usually beginning with *Inspired Talks*, these classes developed into

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readings with discussion by the Swamis and students. Late in the '50s these classes became more formal. Changed from evening to morning, they now consist of scholarly explanations of the Upanishads by Swami Nikhilananda. This past summer (1962) he chose the sixth chapter of the Chhāndogya. The class lasted for two weeks, and students were encouraged to stay for the whole session, not to drop in for just a few days.

These summers have had their light moments, too. Even as Swami Vivekananda often cooked food for his American disciples, so the Swamis of the present day hold picnics and outings and feed their students with Indian preparations.

Vivekananda Rock

In the early days of the rediscovery of the house some of the students fixed upon a rock a good half mile behind the cottage as being the most likely place of Swami Vivekananda's samadhi. It is a beautiful flat rock beneath a great oak tree, overlooking a broad expanse of meadow and commanding an inclusive view of the river. Year after year students have made this rock a place of pilgrimage and it has become known as Vivekananda Rock.

Swami Vivekananda had a magnetic personality, associated with tranquillity. Whether he was walking in the street or standing in a room, there was always the same dignity.

He had a great sense of humour and as a natural correlative, much pathos and pity for affliction. He was a charming companion and entered with ease into any environment he found. And I found that all classes of educated persons that he was brought in contact with looked up to and admired the innate nobility that was in the man. One felt all times that he was, to use a modern expression, 'conscious of the presence of God'. In walking, travelling, and leisure times, there constantly came from him some hardly formulated invocation or expression of devotion.

As a teacher he had a great capacity for perceiving the difficulty of an inquirer, and would elucidate it with great simplicity and point to its solution. At the same time he could enter into great intricacies of thought.

Although if we were enlightened we should see Deity in every manifestation, nevertheless it is a great boon when we can perceive it as patent in noble and holy men. One of such was the Swami Vivekananda.

— E. T. STURDY

* * * *

Oh, the sublime teaching of Swami Vivekananda! No nonsense, no talk of 'astrals', 'imps', etc., but God, Jesus, Buddha. I feel that I shall never be quite the same again for I have caught a glimpse of the Real.

Just think what it means to listen to a Vivekananda at every meal, lessons each morning and the nights on the porch, the eternal stars shining like 'patines of bright gold'! In the afternoon, we take long walks and the Swami literally, and so simply, finds 'books in the running brooks, sermons in stones, and good (God) in everything.' And this same Swami is so merry and fun-loving. We just go *mad* at times.

— MARY C. FUNKE

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SWAMIJI AND HIS MISSION

T. S. AVINASHILINGAM

[Sri T. S. Avinashilingam, M.P., Secretary, Sri Ramakrishna Mission Vidyalaya, Coimbatore Dt., is an author of many books. This article forms a chapter from a book under preparation by him on the Educational Philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. — *Ed.*]

Swami Vivekananda was keenly aware of the great work that had to be done in India and abroad. India had to be resuscitated and rebuilt. A new strong, virile, independent India, based on the great spiritual qualities of love, unselfishness and service had to rise on the ashes of its immediate past of slavery and poverty. While material wealth was necessary, he regarded the human element as being far more important. This is indeed very clear from the letters he wrote to his Madras friends from Yokhohama (Japan) on the way to America as early as in July, 1893, i.e. before the meeting of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. 'India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men. How many men, unselfish, thorough-going men is Madras now ready to supply,' he asks, 'to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things ? — sympathy for the poor and bread to their hungry mouths, and enlightenment to the people at large.'[1] After reaching the United States, he writes again in the same strain : 'A hundred thousand men and women, fortified with the eternal faith in the Lord and nerved to lion's courage by their sympathy for the poor, the fallen and the down-trodden, who will go over the length and breadth of the land preaching the Gospel of help, the Gospel of Social raising up and the Gospel of Equality are necessary.'[2]

Even after his great success in the Parliament of Religions and the United States and the glorious and tumultuous welcome he received everywhere in his whirlwind campaign throughout India, he harps upon the same question. His experience had made his visions clearer. He sees with the clarity of a prophet, that what we need are not dogmas and doctrines but men. He writes on the 6th April, 1897, 'We have brains but no hands. We have the doctrine of Vedanta, but we have not the power to reduce it to practice.

'In our books, there is the great doctrine of universal equality, but in work we make great distinctions. It was in India that unselfish work of the most exalted type was preached, but in practise, we are awfully cruel and heartless and unable to think of anything else besides our own mass-of-flesh bodies. . . . India will awake again if any one could love with all his heart the people of the country — bereft of the grace of affluence, of blasted fortune, down-trodden, ever-starved, quarrelsome and envious. Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-hearted men and women, giving up all desires of enjoying the luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost for the well-being of their countrymen.'[3]

The great mission that he set before himself was to train such men, men of purity, strength and sacrifice. They were to be trained not only in following a life of dedication, but also of service. That was the origin of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

Shortly after the passing away of the Master in 1886, a monastic order was organized by his sanyasin disciples, led by Swami Vivekananda ; its objective was to train monks for the teaching of the universal, non-sectarian principles of religion exemplified in the Master's life and to carry on with the assistance of the lay disciples, missionary and philanthropic work, looking upon all as the mani-

[1] Page 8, Vol. V, *Swami Vivekananda's Complete Works.*
[2] Page 12 *ibid.*
[3] Page 96, Vol. V, *Ibid.*

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festation of the divine, irrespective of caste, colour or creed. First begun in 1897 as the Ramakrishna Mission Association, it was later registered in 1909 as the Ramakrishna Mission under Act XXI of 1860. The life history of the original founders in Baranagore and Alam Bazaar Maths is an inspiring one. For many days they did not have anything to eat and had only tattered clothes to wear. A mat on the floor was their bed even in the bitterest cold. There was only one presentable piece of cloth, which was common property and was hung up on a string, so that whosoever had to go out could wear it.

Immersed in the thought of God, they did not care what befell their external life. It was austerity of the highest type, but of a joyous, creative type. They lived many weeks and months without knowing where their next meal would come from. Only their devotion to the Master and love for their leader and their brother-disciples kept them together.

After the return of Swami Vivekananda from America, events took a brighter turn. His recognition in the West brought with it a great deal of admiration and following in India. The message of the Master began to spread. Under the inspiration of the Swami, many young men gave up their worldly life and dedicated themselves to purity and continence and joined the organization. The life at the Math in those days was really hard. But under the guidance of the direct disciples of the Master, the young men were spurred to great sacrifice and to the bearing of great sufferings, and the work spread throughout the country and abroad.

The ideal of the Mission was to train a body of dedicated workers, who while disciplining themselves for spiritual advancement, would work for the good of the world, by looking upon their work as worship. Explaining this idea of work as worship, Swami Vivekananda said :

> 'All the work you do is subjective and is done for your own benefit. God has not fallen into a ditch for you and me to help Him out, by building a hospital or something of that sort. He allows you to work. He allows you to exercise your muscles in this great gymnasium, not in order to help Him but that you may help yourself. Do you think even an ant will die for want of your help ? Most arrant blasphemy. The world does not need you at all. The world goes on, you are like a drop in this ocean. A leaf does not move, the wind does not blow without Him. Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not of helping Him. Cut out this word "help" from your mind. You cannot help ; it is blaspheming. You are yourself at His pleasure. You worship ! When you give a morsel of food to the dog, you worship the dog as God. God is in that dog. He is the dog. He is all and in all. We are allowed to worship Him. Stand in that reverent attitude to the whole universe and then will come perfect non-attachment. This should be your duty. This is the proper attitude of work.' [4]

This new attitude gave a new turn to the concept of monasticism and monastic life, which is one of the main contributions of the Ramakrishna Mission to modern Indian life. Previously monks and sanyasins cut themselves away from society, retired to forests or caves and carried on their religious practices, rejecting the world as sin. But with this new revolutionary doctrine, the cloistered monasticism of old gave place to a new method of spiritual life, namely that of service to the poor, the sick, the down-trodden and the untouchable, looking upon them as representatives of the divine. With such an attitude, work became worship and service became converted into spiritual *sādhana*. All work done with the idea of getting a return hinders our spiritual progress and in the end brings misery. When we do work as worship, we give up all the fruits of work unto the Lord. Just as water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish man, by giving rise to attachment to results. In fact, it will help him to become free from bondage. Thus we see in various parts of India today, the workers of Sri Ramakrishna Mission deeply engaged in work of various kinds, running schools and colleges, conducting dispensaries and hospitals, organizing relief work during plague, cholera,

[4] Pages 172-3, Vol. V. *Ibid.*

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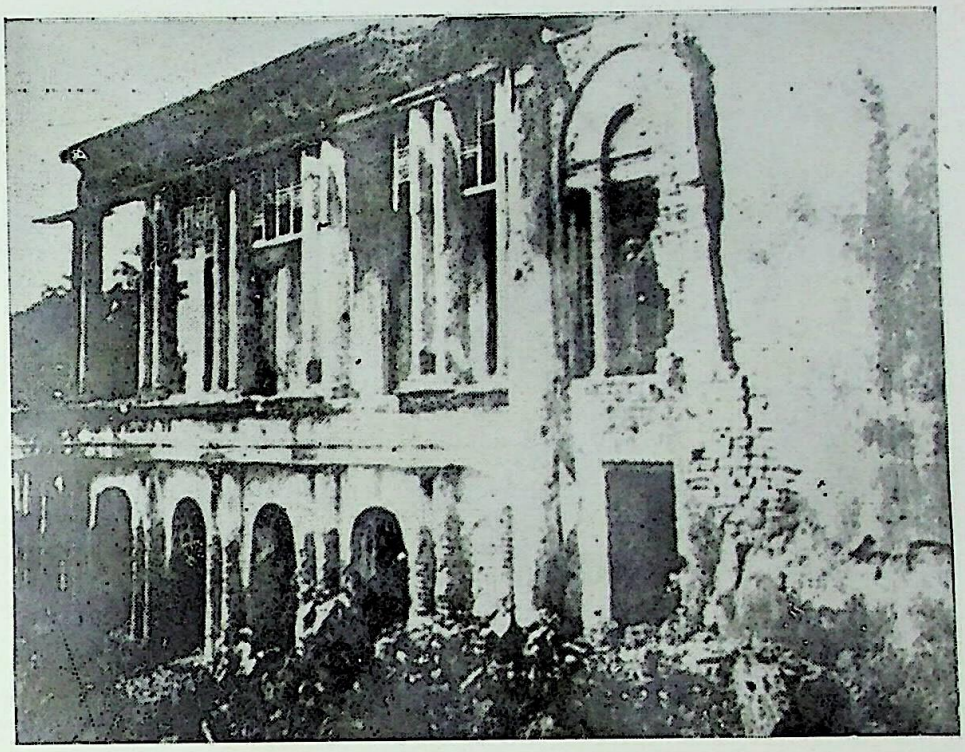

First Math of the Ramakrishna Order at Baranagore (1886)

Swami Vivekananda, 3rd from left (standing), with brother disciples at the Baranagore Math (1887)

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famine and all kinds of other reliefs, with the basic idea that they are serving the Lord in the form of the poor and the sick in various shapes.

It has now centres all over the world, its work is by no means limited to them. In fact, they represent a spiritual movement, which covers a field much vaster than the physical limits of those centres. The significance of their spiritual message is much greater than what we can perceive at the present day. When the world is daily becoming smaller due to the inventions of science, the narrow barriers placed on our minds and thoughts of earlier generations have been shaken. And so the need of the hour is a universal message, which will appeal to all countries and nationalities, to men and women of all creeds and races. What is required is a new faith which will synthesize all existing faiths and have a breadth of outlook, which will accommodate all spiritual experiences and aspirations. There was the need for men, to deliver such a universal message. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, the great Master and his valiant disciple came to fulfil that need. As Mr Christopher Isherwood has stated,

> 'Spiritual Truth is eternal, but it has to be restated and redemonstrated in human life, in order that it may solve the varying problems of each succeeding epoch. Ramakrishna's teaching is our modern Gospel. He lived and taught for us; not for the men of two thousand years ago . . . Sri Ramakrishna is the first teacher to deliver a message consciously addressed both to the East and the West, as two separate though inter-related cultures. Swami Vivekananda carried his message to America and Europe, but he made no attempt to convert the Western peoples away from Christianity to a cult of Ramakrishna. This wise policy is being followed by the centres he founded in the West. Thus the Christian mistake has been avoided. Conversion in the old fashioned sense was anyhow often shortlived and skin-deep and in many cases a disguised function of colonialism'.[5]

The Ramakrishna Math and Mission through their various centres and publications and above all through personal touch and inspiration are engaged in spreading this universal message, so much needed in the modern age. It is very difficult indeed to measure the scope and strength of a new spiritual force. We are much too near the source to appreciate and evaluate it. The full effect of that force will be known only when the movement has flowered and grown to its full size in the course of the centuries.

It is our proud privilege to live at a time, when the message is fresh and can be had from the direct disciples of the Master, or from those who have been near and dear to them. Let us open our hearts and minds, to this great spiritual awakening. Let us draw deep this eternal wisdom and be blessed by it.

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[5] Foreword to the History of the Ramakrishna Mission.

Swami Vivekananda's power lay, perhaps, in the courage he gave others. He did not ever seem to be conscious of himself at all. It was the other man who interested him. 'When the book of life begins to open, then the fun begins,' he would say. He used to make us realize there was nothing secular in life; it was all holy. 'Always remember, you are incidentally an American, and a woman, but always a child of God. Tell yourself day and night who you are. Never forget it.' That is what he used to tell us. His presence, you see, was dynamic. You cannot pass that power on unless you have it, just as you cannot give money away unless you have it.... While he was lecturing, he was always completely absorbed in what he was talking about.

— JOSEPHINE MACLEOD

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CONTRIBUTION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TO HINDU PHILOSOPHY

M. P. PANDIT

[Sri M. P. Pandit from Sri Aurobindo Ashrama, Pondicherry is well-known to our readers, both from his occasional contributions as also from the reviews of books, as a linguist and scholar. In his learned article he delineates in a short compass what Swamiji has done to revitalize Hindu thought. — *Ed.*]

What Vivekananda gave to Hindu Philosophy was much more than a contribution. He revived it and gave it a new lease of life. For, even before decay had set in the general life of the country, her spiritual tradition of which religion and philosophy are the twin wings, had ceased to be a living force. The springs of philosophy had dried up and all that was of value in the old heritage had been covered with an overgrowth of scholastic verbiage. Philosophy had become a subject for specialists to study and expound like other sciences of medicine, astrology, astronomy, etc. It was no more a live factor in the general life of the people as it had been in the hey-day of Indian civilization. To Vivekananda must go the credit for being the first in the present age to pull back the legacy from the attic, endow it with a new life and a new garb and make it a force for governing the lives of individuals and societies.

Vivekananda could do it because he himself embodied the best traditions of the Indian Quest for the Spirit and the Philosophy which expressed it in terms of the intellect. The first feature of this tradition is its universalism. It does not claim any monopoly over Truth. It admits a thousand roads to the Capitol of Brahman and is always eager to enrich itself with the gains of journeyings on other and newer paths. Vivekananda voiced this urge most emphatically, and following the example of his great Master, he approached the truths of all Faiths with a becoming humility: 'I accept all religions that were in the past and worship them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the Mosque of a Mohammedan. I shall enter the Christian Church and kneel before the Crucifix. I shall enter the Buddhist temple and there I shall take refuge in the Buddha and his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation trying to see the light which enlightens the heart of every one.'

Secondly, he believed to the letter the declaration of the Vedanta that All is Brahman. He saw God in the lowly as much as in the high, and dedicated himself — and called upon others — to the service of God in each creature. In order that the perception of the Divine in all shall not remain only as a mental knowledge, he gave a method whereby all the faculties, the senses of man, could be trained to seek and serve the Divine in every one. In declaring that 'We are servants of that God who by the ignorant is called man. There is but one basis of well-being, social, political or spiritual — to know that I and my brother are one. This is true for all countries and all people', he laid the basis for a unique synthesis of the way of Knowledge, of Works and of Devotion. Not that social service was something new in Indian society. The newness lay in the turn given by Vivekananda in the change of motif. Work for the fellowmen in need, not as a debt to be paid to the collective society from whom one derives a many-sided help, not even as a deposit in the bank of Karma on the credit side for future encashment, but as a labour of love to Him who dwells in the suffering humanity. So done, it is at once a step in the enlargement of the narrow boundaries of one's consciousness and

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a consecration of energies in dedication to the Lord whose presence is increasingly felt and realized in the All.

He set the goal of the Vedanta before every one. But he brought to bear another Way to arrive at it. He laid stress on Shakti, the Divine Puissance at work in the Universe and called upon each individual to awake to its presence in himself, give shape to its articulations and build up the Power, first for realization of the Divine and then for execution of Its Purpose.

And he kept alive in himself the Vedic Agni always aflame for wider and newer realms in the Infinitude of God. To him Knowledge was not a closed book. It was a growing and expanding Power leading the progression of mankind. He said: 'The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran, and all other sacred books are so many pages, and an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave my heart open for all of them.' He thus summed up in his own person the best in the spiritual tradition of the past and linked it with the dawning future of immense possibilities. His work in this field did not come to a close with the termination of his earthly career. It continues. It continues overtly and covertly, helping humanity to advance in the still unexplored expanses of the Divine Spirit.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND CERTAIN TENETS OF HINDU PHILOSOPHY

P. K. SUNDARAM

[Dr. P. K. Sundaram, M.A., Ph.D., Lecturer in Philosophy, University of Madras, brings forth in this exquisite paper how Swamiji reinterpreted and restated the meaning of some theories and tenets so essential to Hinduism. — *Ed.*]

I

The Swami made certain tenets basic to Hinduism fluid again. By his powerful and inspired thought, the dead watchwords undiscerningly uttered and popularized, began to disclose live *energy* within them. The theories of *Karma* and *Māyā*, the first in religion and the other in philosophy, had lost all their original significance and were so contorted and outworn through misuse that both degenerated into a view of deadening fatalism and intellectual torpor and obscurantism. It was the singular credit of the Swami to have enlivened these concepts and unfolded the stupendous world-view that they contained; a view that was the very opposite of fatalism and torpor.

After the days of the Great Ācāryas, who established the Vedānta, it was the Swami who travelled the entire expanse of India as a *Parivrājaka*. And at the southern most tip of India, the vision of the secret of the strength of this ancient land, which can hold its own anywhere in the world, naturally unfolded itself to him. Hinduism was thus to the Swami no abstract theory, but a live religion. It was in the very veins of the people in India, as it were. He could see the dormant soul of India face to face.

But the Swami in these travels saw the heavy and thick incrustations that had overlaid dangerously the vital arteries of Hindu religion. He saw, not merely that the masses suffered incurably from crushing poverty and blinding illiteracy, but, as a result, they were on the point of losing their very individuality, their soul. This spiritual malady was fundamental and could never be remedied superficially by social reforms which touch only the fringes of the problem by reorienting certain customs and beliefs. The Swami wrote in sarcasm and with deep concern in a letter to Sri Haridas Vihari Das Desai from Chicago: 'Educate

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and raise the masses; thus alone is a nation possible. Our reformers do not see where the wound is; they want to save the nation by marrying the widows. Do you think that a nation is saved by the number of husbands its widows get?' Not that the Swami wanted the widows to suffer; but that was not enough to root out the entire disease in the body-politic.

The problem was more fundamental and radical and so should the solution be. About educating the masses of people the Swami was insistent. He wrote to the Maharaja of Mysore on 23rd June 1894: 'The only service to be done for the lower classes is to give them education, to develop their lost individuality . . . give them ideas, and the rest will follow.' Education, according to the Swami, is the manifestation of the perfection already in man, as religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man. Only the lion is to be awakened.

While the Swami stirred the people to purposeful action, he was not slow to remind them again and again that this regenerate dynamism to be effective should be rooted in the rockbed of renunciation and detachment. It was not the fury of the merest impulse to action that he advocated. Sovereign peace should be established first in the heart and from that centre should issue forth meaningful action. 'The motive power of the whole Universe,' said the Swami, 'is unselfishness, renunciation and love.' Again: 'Renunciation is the very basis of ethics. It says, *"not I, but thou"*.'

Not reform of society, but reform of one's own self was the need of the hour. India wanted men who had character, a life, a centre. It wanted God-men to lead the way. Realization of the divinity in oneself was the first step to be taken. This was the special responsibility of the intellectuals, though, of course, for those who could not even read and write, whose lot was worse than that of beasts, the first thing to be done was education and nutrition. Starving bellies should come first in the order of priority if higher virtues are to be followed. When the Swami demanded that the ignorant were to be educated, he meant it in two senses. The first was the usual one, that the illiterate masses should be taught the three R's. The second ignorance that he had in mind was the ignorance of our own divinity. He said: 'The real evil is ignorance; to dispel ignorance the light of truth should be brought in. One's real nature, the light self-effulgent and ever pure, should be remembered and manifested.' This ignorance is shared by both the illiterate and the intellectual. The Swami said that the Advaitic prayer is: 'Rise, Thou Effulgent one! Rise, Thou who art always pure! Rise, Thou Birthless and Deathless one! Rise, Almighty One! and manifest Thy true nature. These little manifestations do not befit Thee.'

The very interpretations that the Swami gave of the central concepts of Hinduism like the theory of *Karma* and of *Māyā* were intended to vitalize a nation which had for long centuries buried itself in national inactivity and hopelessness.

II

The Swami expounded the theory of *Karma* and rebirth in a very forceful way calculated to show that this theory was the very antithesis of fatalism. No other theory than that of Karma could offer a satisfactory hypothesis to explain the inscrutable diversity of talents and status of man and animals. The innate capacity to acquire knowledge, for instance, is so widely varied among men that one cannot but conclude that each one of us comes into this life, not with a *tabula rasa*, but with a latent fund of knowledge or impressions. New experiences are to be assimilated to the old if knowledge is to arise. The Swami called these the *pigeon-holes* into which the new experiences are assorted and accommodated in order to become knowledge. Otherwise, the new will always remain unintelligible and anarchic. Knowledge can come only through experience. Hence it is that the latent fund of knowledge with which one is born should have been the result of experiences in an earlier birth and is

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being carried over into the present birth. Even the so-called instincts are only crystallization of what were once voluntary actions. This crystallization does not accrue to the body but only to the soul since the body perishes at death.

Nor can it be said that one's present birth is wholly conditioned by and transmitted from the parents by laws of heredity. There is a hereditary transmission so far as the instrument of the body is concerned. But it is for the soul's experience that the body is manufactured. Again, how can the physical germ contain the mental experience? If in the bioplasmic cell the infinite amount of impressions from time immemorial through an unbroken line of parents and offsprings have entered, where and how can they exist there? If the infinite number of impressions have without addition or subtraction been there and been responsible for the mental and physical characteristics of the offspring at every stage, all the offsprings should have been alike. If there has been mutation at any stage, how did this enter into the germ-cells? The very assumption, that mental experience can be recorded in matter, according to the Swami, is most astonishing and is without proof.

Again, another merit of the theory of reincarnation according to the Swami is that only on that supposition the freedom of the souls could be reasonably maintained. As we sow, so we reap. If the present is the result of past deeds by the same token of reasoning the future will be decided by our *karma* now. We are the authors of the present; so shall we be of the future also. Man fulfils his own destiny. When we ostensibly fail in our strivings, we throw the blame on fate, Providence etc. Seldom do we realize the insufficiencies in ourselves.

The Swami believed that evolution and involution imply each other. Therefore, the souls in transmigration go up and down in the scale of life, now as animal, now as man and now again as a worm. When the cycle of birth and death is complete, the soul returns to peace. The Swami held that freedom from the cycle of transmigration is bound to come to one and all sooner or later.

Of course, the Swami affirmed that the question of transmigration arises only in the apparent *Jīvahood* which is a conditioned existence of the Self. Freedom and immortality can have meaning only when the soul gets beyond the pale of causation. Since Self is pure, free and eternal, its being in bondage is only adventitious to it. What is more, its notion of limitedness by time and change cannot have a basis in reality. For one's nature can never be lost. So, the *Jīva-hood* is only apparent. The truth is *ajāti*, or non-origination, says the Swami.

The objection to the theory of re-birth, that it is inexplicable on this theory how one does not remember one's previous birth, is considered by the Swami. If existence depended upon the memory of it, we would have to say that we did not exist as babies, for no one remembers his babyhood.

The theory of *Karma* is transformed in the hands of the Swami into a clarion-call to the port of freedom on two counts: (1) The element of freedom is, however paradoxical, inherent in the theory of rebirth and *karma*, and (2) the very notion of being born is illusory, the self being eternally free. One can choose either of them, and realize his freedom. For those who want freedom of initiative in action, the first is enough; for those who will not rest short of eternity, the second is to be necessarily known.

III

The Concept of Māyā

Of this important concept of *Māyā* in the Advaita philosophy, one finds one of the clearest analysis in the Swami's writings and speeches. His view of the world and of our life in it, is at once apparent when one goes through this analysis. The very finitude and limitation that we find ourselves in, when our true nature is eternal freedom, bespeaks *Māyā*. This is one meaning of the term *Māyā*. Again the lure of the finite is *Māyā*. It is the perpetual 'Tan-

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talus' Hell'. While we have the glimpse of the truth, yet, we are, almost against our will, swayed in the opposite direction. Knowing fully well the futility of temporal ends of life, we vigorously pursue these ends. And this is *Māyā*. The world seems to be so substantial and real that all questions with reference to it, seem to be unnecessary dust raised by the woolly metaphysicians. But once an analysis is started in the nature of things in the world, perplexities crop up. No single ultimate question can be answered. Whether it is the beginning of the world, time and change, cause and effect, problem of knowledge, the presence of evil etc., we are none the better for asking them. The world of *Māyā* is likely to remain always a puzzle to mind, for the very mind is *Māyā*. Again though the world is ultimately not real, yet it appears. And this is *Māyā*. The world is, again, indeterminable as either real or unreal. It is not real because the Self alone is real. It is not totally unreal because it appears. The Swami calls it a 'mysterious twilight' of appearance.

However puzzling the world of *Māyā* is, yet, it can be transcended. Though we cannot explain the world by our canons of reason, yet we can put an end to our being deluded by its lures, just as illusions are got over by knowledge.

IV

The Vedas

The Swami frequently spoke about the Vedas and worship of images which are part and parcel of Hindu religious practice and subscribed to the view that the Vedas are eternal. He was not apologetic about any aspect of Hinduism. The laws, physical, mental and spiritual, have neither beginning, nor end, and so eternally are there. In other words the truths that the Vedas embodied are eternal. The Ṛṣis to whom the truths were revealed were seers and they discovered the truth that was already there. Truth is not created; it is always found. The Vedas are not mere books. The Swami said: They mean the accumulated treasure of spiritual laws discovered by different persons at different times. The Vedas declare that one is not the body, but the spirit. The Vedic sage proclaims: 'Hear, ye children of immortal-bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One, who is beyond all darkness, all delusion. By knowing *Him* alone, will you be saved from death over again'.

V

Idolatry

To the charge that Hindus are misguided worshippers of idols, the Swami makes a trenchant reply. There is no polytheism, nor henotheism for that matter, in India. In every temple all the attributes are applied to each God. The principle is: 'theories are not explanations; a rose by any other name, would smell as sweet'. The Hindu knows that it is not the idol that is omnipresent God. He knows also that the image helps to fix his mind on the symbol, hold it there, and transcend, for however fleeting a moment, the limitations of the image into that presence which the image is deliberately designed to symbolize. Image-worship is not an error. To the Hindu, says the Swami, man is not travelling so much from error to truth as from truth to truth, from the lower to the higher. Even the crudest belief is not unmixed with truth. It is because the Hindu thinks that the immeasurable Reality cannot be grasped by the feeble mind of man except through signs and symbols — and, be it noted, these symbol-worships are not obligatory in Hinduism — that the Hindu takes naturally and easily, as fish takes to water, all the contrarieties of religious worship, that have found their home in India, as only so many complementaries. Religion in its essence is found everywhere. It is not the exclusive possession of a few.

This attitude issues forth in the concept of universal religion on which the Swami spoke so much. I may quote him in full:

> 'If there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place

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or time, which will be infinite, like the God it will preach; and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brahmanical or Buddhist, Christian or Mohommedan; but the sum-total of these, and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms and find a place for, every human being.'

The Swami himself expressed his objective in one of his letters to a disciple in February 17, 1896:

'To put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds, is a task which only those can understand who have attempted it. The abstract Advaita must become living — poetic — in everyday life; and out of bewildering yogism must come the most scientific and practical psychology — and all these must be put into such a form that a child may grasp it. This is my life's work. The Lord only knows how far I shall succeed. To work we have the right, not to the fruits thereof.'

VI

That the Swami has, in a way as no one else could have, achieved what he attempted to achieve, viz., a revival of the ancient spirit of Hinduism and a reawakened faith in the soundness of its philosophy and religion, the posterity, to whom he bequeathed the fruits of his labour, knows and acknowledges with deep gratitude in this Swamiji's centenary year of 1963.

CONTRIBUTION OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA TO HINDU PHILOSOPHY

ANTHONY ELENJIMITTAM

[Sri Anthony Elenjimittam is Editor, *Basic Education*, a journal devoted to religion and education, published from Bombay. He is also conducting a school at Bombay and has been contributing articles to *Vedanta Kesari*, sometimes under pen-names also. In this article he presents beautifully Swamiji's contribution to Indian culture in general and Hindu Philosophy in particular. — *Ed.*]

Vivekananda is not a name; it is a world; a new dynamic force; an encyclopedia of the twentieth century religious philosophy and culture; a dream, a vision of the Universal Humanity at its divine heights and psychic best; an urge, an inspiration for young and old of the East and the West; a prophet, a pioneer broadcasting station of the universalist gospel of bridging the East and the West, India and the World, man and God, through the Vedantic vision of the seers and Rishis of yore, so incisively and uniquely experienced and expressed through his immortal words and deeds.

India, like pre-Christian Greece, is the richest treasure-house of religious and philosophical experiments and experiences. Freedom from any authoritarian imposition and the birth-right of each individual to search for and find out his own way to spiritual perfection is zealously guarded by our representative seers and prophets. Within the broad-based Hindu skies even an atheist, an agnostic, a *charvaka*, the Buddhists or Jains have the same honoured place as a rigidly orthodox Vedantin or ceremoniously rigorous caste-ridden Brahmin. If modern Europe had even twenty per cent of the tolerant attitude of Indian Rishis and sages, the century-old tensions and antagonisms between the Catholics and Protestants, the Christians and the Jews could have been solved long ago.

The most impregnable fort and the unique contribution of India to the world market of cultures in the history of civilization is evi-

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dently in the realm of philosophical religion, or better, religious philosophy. Whatever be the wall built by Western theologians between philosophy and religion, in India there exists no steel wall whatsoever between Religion and Philosophy, both being but the two sides of the same medal, two aspects of the same vision of Reality.

Religion, almost everywhere is pure gold mixed up with lead, all charity and compassion mixed up with cruelty and bloodshed, all rationalistic intuition diluted with most stupid superstitions. That is the reason, the wisest among men turned their minds to philosophy, which means practical wisdom of life gained through reason, intuition and mystical experience. In the West, philosophy means literally, *philos-sophia* — lover or love of wisdom. Chief among the European Scholastics define philosophy as 'knowledge of man, God and universe through their ultimate causes'. In India, however, philosophy means *darshan* — vision of Reality transcending appearances, apprehension of the Infinite in and through the finite, realization of the true Self in man. The chief difference, then, in the concept of philosophy of the East and the West consists in this that, whereas in European history philosophy means knowledge of things through the ultimate cause or causes, in India philosophy means realization of Self through redemptive gnosis or *Jñāna*. In fact, the concept of *Jñāna* or *Vidyā* in the Upaniṣads, and the Yoga is very much akin to the *beatific vision* of the Christian theologians and thinkers, the *gnosis* of the Greek philosophers, the *Nirvaṇa* of the Buddhists and the *summum bonum* of various other historic religions.

In India there is no borderland between philosophy and religion because both tend to the one goal, viz. Self-realization, philosophy for the intellectuals, while religion for the masses who are to be led through faith and authority to the land of vision and realization. By their very nature philosophers are iconoclasts, as the religious are idol and image worshippers, anthropomorphists and ritualists. It is when there is a harmonious blend between *darshan* or philosophy and *Dharma* or religion in the same individual that we come across towering personalities who stand at Everest summits in the realms of religion and philosophy. That was Shankara and Ramanuja; that was Augustine and Aquinas; that was Ramakrishna and Vivekananda in our own age. Ramakrishna was the seer, whose missionary apostle and dynamic propagandist was Swami Vivekananda.

In Swami Vivekananda Indian philosophy found its twentieth century fulfilment. In him everything is positive, a supreme yes. It is not as much the *neti, neti* aspect of Brahman, but the *iti-iti* aspect of Reality that expressed itself through Vivekananda. The old slur, that Indian religions like Hinduism and Buddhism are world-denying in their essence, does not hold good any more with Swami Vivekananda, with whom religion literally means 'manifestation of Divinity already in man', but a divinity which wakes up the lion in us and strengthens us to face the problems of life courageously and solve them effectively.

Our Vedic and Upaniṣadic philosophers compared the absorption of *Jivātma* in *Paramātma*, the goal of religion; to a dewdrop melting in the shining sea of Brahman. But Swamiji speaks of 'arousing the lion of divinity' as the goal of religion and making this awakened religion to forge ahead in solving the pressing economic, social, educational and cultural problems of India. This reinterpretation of the life-accepting aspect of the religious philosophy of India by Swami Vivekananda is a distinct contribution to modern philosophy.

In many countries of the world, more specially in Europe in the middle ages, there existed a tendency to accept everything if only blessed by the sanctimonious name of religion. It is then that religious philosophers resorted almost exclusively to the introspective method of subjective experiences to interpret man, cosmos and the phenomena of the objective universe. That was due to no fault of theirs. Neither Shankara, nor Ramanuja, Madhvacharya nor Chaitanya had the accumulated evidence of modern science at their disposal

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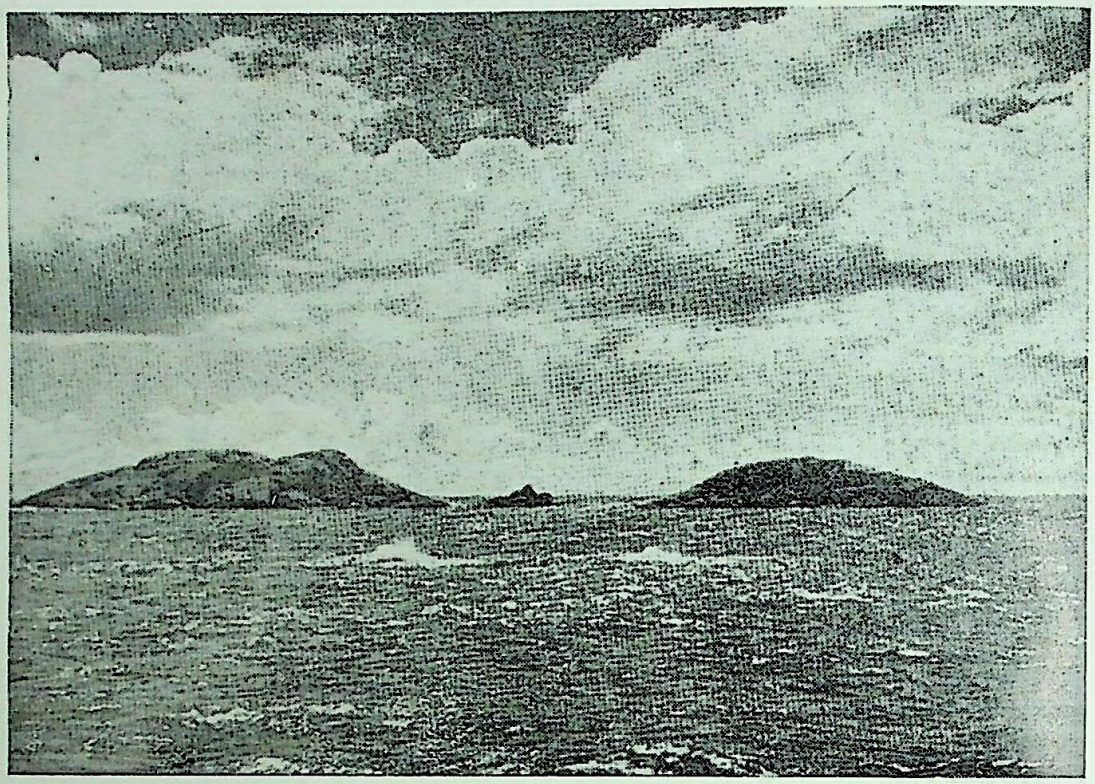
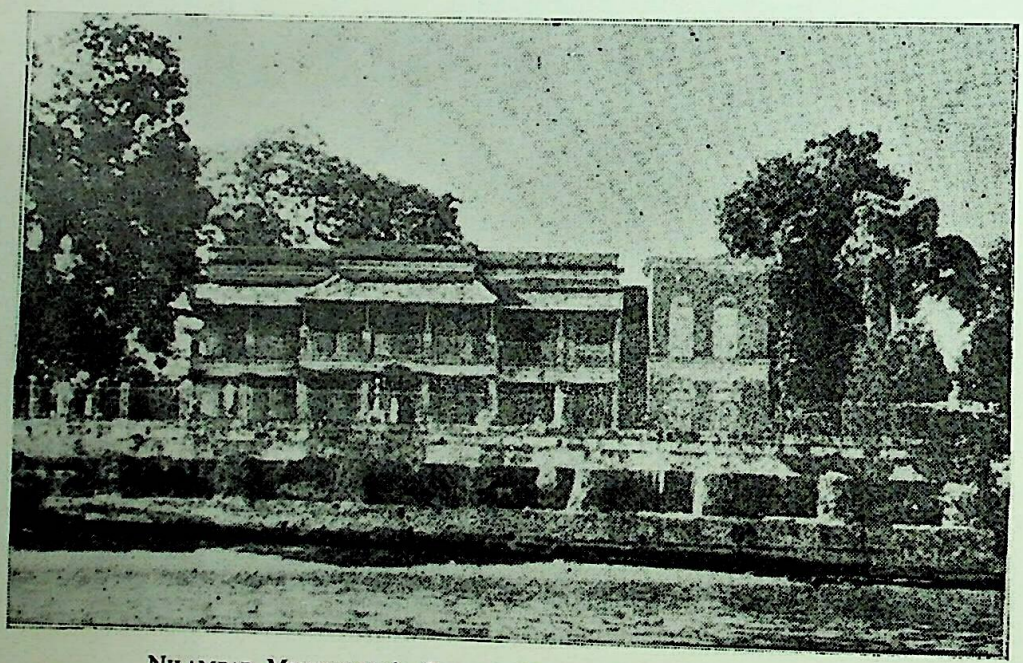


VIVEKANANDA ROCK AT KANYAKUMARI

(From where Swamiji looked at India and pondered over her problems, and where he was vouchsafed the vision of his future work.)



NILAMBAR MUKHERJEE'S GARDEN HOUSE, BELUR, (HOWRAH DT.)

(Sanctified by the Holy Mother's stay, this was where the Math was shifted to, from Alambazar, prior to its removal to its own premises in 1898.)

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to integrate their subjective experiences with the facts and data of the scientific world. But twentieth century Vivekananda was educated in the Western critical and scientific spirit with pure springs of rationalism and humanism gushing forth from his keen and sharp intellect. This led Narendranath Dutta to agnosticism, scepticism. It was with these weapons of modern scientific training and Western influence that the young seeker approached the sage of Dakshineswar, the God-realized and spirit-intoxicated saint of universal harmony of religions.

The Vedas were books, while Ramakrishna was realization. It is in communion with this Realization Embodied that Swami Vivekananda found his equilibrium and integration between empirical sciences and Self-realization. It was reserved for the great Swamiji to teach that Religion needed correction in the light of Science as much as Science needed correction in the light of Religion. Actually Swami Vivekananda was himself an embodiment of both the religious esoteric of philosophy on the one side, and the modern scientific culture on the other. It is in this sense that Swamiji's teachings, his lectures and writings, his great ideals and words of power stand out as a kind of bridge between Science and Religion, between Eastern mysticism and Western practicality.

With these as premises, we may specify some of the most outstanding contributions of Swami Vivekananda to modern Hindu philosophy and culture.

1. The first and foremost contribution of Swami Vivekananda to Indian thought and philosophy is the universalization of Vedanta and the broad-based Hindu culture which made the doctrine and teaching of the Swamiji transcend the limits of India or even Asia, and embrace the entire mankind. Hindu philosophy is no more a racial and national heritage; it is the common patrimony of mankind. The Swami universalized the very concept of Vedas when he said:

> 'By the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery, and would still exist if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical and spiritual relations between soul and soul and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and would remain even if we forgot them'.
>
> —*Address at the Parliament of Religions.*

This universalization and sky-high catholicity made the Swami say that he would kneel with the Christians in a Christian Church, squat with Hindus in a temple, and bow down in a Mosque with Moslems. The very same universalization made the Swami accept all *scriptures* and all *religions as true*. To his religio-philosophical genius there is no journey of man from error to truth, but from lower truth to higher truth. Error is something negative which is repulsive to him.

2. From the Vedantic catholicity as the Swamiji conceived it and Sri Ramakrishna realized it, there took place a kind of wedding between the philosophic iconoclastic *nirākāra* Brahman with the popular religious traditions stored up in the rituals, idols, dogmas and creeds. Religions at their lower levels have a place for the masses who are incapable of arriving at the heights of divinity potentially inlaid in each man. They are to be led by hand, as it were from temples, idols, rituals and ceremonies to the gnostic heights which terminate in the knowledge and realization of the Absolute. Says the great Swami:

> 'Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal.
>
> 'Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control or philosophy, by one or more, or all of these — and be free.
>
> 'This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details'.
>
> —*Raja Yoga.*

3. The restoration of Indian philosophy to its pristine *Advaitic* purity, and harmonizing Bādarāyana's and Śankara's non-dualistic,

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idealistic, monism with the progress of modern science on the one side and the essential tenets of other religions. These are all specific contributions of Swami Vivekananda to Indian culture of the twentieth century. Similarly, in the field of education, monasticism and national service, the well-known powerful phrases of the Swamiji are all reminiscent of the Upaniṣadic wisdom.

About the real education, in tune with yogic psychology, he said :

> 'To me the very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would develop the power of concentration and detachment, and with a perfect instrument I could collect facts at will.... Side by side in the child, should be developed the power of concentration and detachment'.
>
> —*Lectures and Discourses.*

These words of religious and philosophic urge surged forth from the depths of a soul which gave primary importance to spiritual values and character. Our routine educationists and government departments, who know no better system of education than forcing the children to cram up certain books and notes and then secure a diploma with a view to obtaining a lucrative job, need seriously revise and reform their methods in the light of Swamiji's teachings.

Each nation, said Vivekananda, has its own genius and mission in the world. India's genius is always in the realm of philosophy and religion which from time immemorial, of the Vedic Rishis to our day, has been kept intact through an unbroken chain of savants, saints and seers. Among such representative men of thought and action, the contribution of Swami Vivekananda is unique whether we turn to pure Vedantic philosophy, Yoga psychology, Indian Social Sciences or even the economic and socio-political revolution which the Swami envisaged.

In the galaxy of modern eminent Indians, the unique role held by Swami Vivekananda consists in this that he built up a synthesis of Indian philosophy with the world culture today ; that he pointed out its practical applications to mental health and hygiene, to the much-needed social reforms and economico-political justice to the underdogs, the downtrodden and the have-nots, whom he called his God. The picture of a youthful awakened India, purged of all follies and accumulated accretions which dimmed or killed the vital spark of the Upaniṣadic wisdom, was ever before his eyes. The plight of an over-whelming majority of Indians suffering under the dead weight of socio-economic injustice burned his heart and made the great Swami roll in tears and breathe with bleeding lungs for months and years. It is not an arm-chair philosophy preached in college lecture halls that appealed to him, but a philosophy that brought bread to the hungry and raised the very picture of India up to the skies. That was Vivekananda. That was his mission and vocation ; that was his contribution to twentieth century Indian culture.

Real existence, real knowledge, and real love are eternally connected with one another, the three in one : where one of them is, the others also must be ; they are the three aspects of the One without a second—the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. When that existence becomes relative, we see it as the world ; that knowledge becomes in its turn modified into the knowledge of the things of the world ; and that bliss forms the foundation of all true love known to the heart of man. Therefore true love can never react so as to cause pain either to the lover or to the beloved. . . . With love there is no painful reaction ; love only brings a reaction of bliss ; if it does not, it is not love ; it is mistaking something else for love.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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VIVEKANANDA'S CONTRIBUTION TO HINDUISM

S. RAJAGOPALA SASTRI

[Sri S. Rajagopala Sastri, M.A., Professor of Philosophy, Vivekananda College, Madras, has in this scholarly exposition presented the immensity of Swamiji's contribution to Hinduism in a most lucid manner. — *Ed.*]

In the *Kaṭhopaniṣad* it is said that the Lord created the senses turning them outward. This explains why man is always, as a rule, uninterested in religious and spiritual matters. It is a realization of the sense of values, moral and spiritual that distinguishes man from animals. But we may say that the feeling, however nebulous, of the existence of God or a Superior Being, is almost instinctive in the human mind, and all religions, ancient and modern have emphasized this fact, as also the necessity for the cultivation of this feeling.

It is the peculiar prerogative of Hinduism that unlike religions like Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Jainism etc., it has no historical founder. But every religion has inevitably institutionalized and organized as a result of the impact of social forces. Personal religion is always superior and dynamic when contrasted with institutional religion and though one is inextricably intertwined with the other, the purity and soundness of religion can be had only in the sources. But at the same time we have to see that the tenets, which may not always be consistent with one another, are always liable to different interpretations. We may illustrate this aspect of religion by taking Hinduism. The Śruti, i.e., the Vedas, including the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, together with the Bhagavad Gītā, constitutes the source of our religion. The age of interpretation came earlier than even Śankarācārya, when different Ācāryas interpreted and systematized the fundamentals in their own way and thus gave rise to different schools of thought which gradually became sectional, narrow and dogmatic.

Taking Vedanta philosophy as an example, we may easily see that though it arose on the basis of the various Upaniṣads, as a result of differences in interpretation, we have several schools of Vedanta like the Advaita, the Viśiṣṭādvaita, the Dvaita, the Suddhādvaita, Dvaitādvaita, Bhedābheda and so on, each differing from the other. But from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came a process of synthesis, when thoughtful leaders began to emphasize the essentials and argued that like a string running through the various beads, the fundamental characteristics of religion were the same in all the systems of Hinduism. Secondly, the knowledge of religious practices, beliefs and doctrines gradually began to find their way out of India, thanks to the labours of enlightened souls. The greatest work in this direction was by Swami Vivekananda, whose lectures expounding Hinduism throughout the length and breadth of America worked a miracle, as it were, in enabling educated Americans understand our religion. Swamiji's lectures had the force of a tornado in their intensity. The incredulous audience were galvanized by the resplendence and glory of Hinduism. 'Hinduism invades America' was the most appropriate title given to this phenomenon by contemporary Americans who found to their surprise that Hinduism was like an 'expanding universe', with almost innumerable facets and that it was second to none in the lofty idealism of its doctrines and in its profundity and depth of comprehension. Vivekananda's greatest work was his preaching the gospel of Hinduism to Americans and making them realize the loftiness of the spirituality of India, irrespective of her then material degra-

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dation. Swamiji felt that India had a message to deliver to the world so far as spirit was concerned. There was no aspect of religion he did not touch and like the Advaitin, that he was, he was faithful to the Śruti in his exposition. His masterly eloquence, the simplicity of his language, the profound mastery which he exhibited in his presentation, his essential humility and the sparkle of wit in answering questions — all these made a profound impression in the land of the Parliament of Religions.

A notable feature is the interpretation or the re-interpretation of the tenets of Hinduism by Vivekananda. The general position that he takes up in his exposition is that of Advaita Vedanta, but he looks at the problems of religion from a broader point of view. As he himself says in a lecture delivered in London,

> 'Religion must be studied on a broader basis than formerly... All sectarian ideas and tribal and national ideas of religion must be given up... All that was good in the past must be preserved and the doors must be kept open for future additions to the already existing store. Religions also must be inclusive and not look down with contempt upon one another because their particular ideals of God are different.'

His appreciation of Advaita itself is due to the fact that it agrees with and even goes a little farther than modern researches, both on physical and moral lines. Again the Advaita system, from the very start, has been non-destructive. 'Do not disturb the faith of any... but help every one to get higher and higher; include all humanity.' Vivekananda was of the firm view that all religions are merely different forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind and that

> 'through high philosophy or low, through the most exalted mythology or the grossest, through the most refined ritualism or arrant fetishism, every sect, every soul, every nation, consciously or unconsciously is struggling upward toward God.'

Hence no religion is false. On the contrary it is only less real. As he puts it, we do not go from the unreal to the real or from error to truth but only from the less real to the more real. This line of teaching has made Vivekananda the protagonist of a world religion, a universal religion, neither national nor sectarian and this advocacy of the validity of all religions is on a par with that universal outlook taught in the Bhagavad Gītā.

Swamiji did not mince words when he spoke on Godhead. To a startled and bewildered world he preached the great Advaitic truth that each one of us is divine, that religion is the realization of this divinity that is potentially in us and that the methods of realization are work, knowledge, faith, devotion and concentration. His motto appended to his exposition of Raja Yoga is a masterly summary of what religion is and expresses in an inimitable manner what Hinduism is.

To appreciate his contribution to our religion it is necessary at this stage to find out in greater detail what exactly the Swami preached regarding Hinduism. As we have seen, he always maintained that man is divine and that in the last analysis he is really Brahman, of whom the Upaniṣads speak with one voice as *sat, cit, ananta, ānanda* — the *Bhūma*. Very often he does not distinguish the Impersonal Absolute from the personal but merely designates both as God so far as general teaching is concerned. It is true that there is no cut and dried distinction between the two. The *Impersonal* and *Nirguṇa* is not superior to or different from the personal and *Saguṇa*. The latter is only an aspect of the former and hence each is non-different from the other. It is probably not right to interpret Śankara's teachings in this connection that he regarded Īśwara or Saguṇa Brahman as ultimately unreal. The latter is Brahman associated with Māyā. While he does not say that the views of the Viśiṣṭādvaitins or Dvaitins regarding the nature of the Absolute are wrong, he describes them as partial and incomplete, and lower in the scale of evolution of the God concept. Brahman is one, without *sajātiya, vijātiya* and *svagatabheda*, — one indivisible, partless, pure existence, conscious-

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ness and bliss. He thus taught Monistic Vedanta and not mono-theistic Vedanta. Hence the world is not a part of God nor is God a blend of both *cit* and *acit*. It is not a creation of a personal God but is only a manifestation of God and hence is unreal from the pāramārtha point of view. Māyā not only prevents us from seeing Brahman as one (āvaraṇa) but also wrongly distorts this Brahman into a multiplicity, which is merely the world of nāma-rūpa. The question : what is Māyā, the Swami answers by a series of dazzling illustrations which have the effect of making us intuitively understand it, though we do not succeed in logically defining it. The ancient Hindu philosophers use the concept of Māyā or nescience to explain how the Absolute became the relative ; how the multiplicity of the world arose from the *one* Brahman ; how the particular came from the universal. But the principle of Māyā is a mere statement of fact and does not explain the phenomenal world. We do not know the 'how' or the 'why' of it. Māyā is nothing more than the contradictions which are inherent in our knowledge, experience and feelings. The principle of Māyā is pivotal to Advaita and problems like the creation or manifestation of the world, the relation between Jīva and Ātman, the necessity for realization are all explainable only on this basis. *'Atma ca Brahma'*, is what the Śruti teaches and this implies that the Jīva or the individual soul is the same as Brahman. In several of his lectures the Swami has very clearly discussed the nature of this Ātman. It has neither form nor shape and hence is omnipresent. The categories of time, space and causation are only in the mind and the Ātman, which is not mind, is beyond these three categories. This leads us to conclude that it is infinite. Anything that is infinite can be only *one*, for the concept of *two* infinite things is meaningless. The Ātman, therefore is only one, in spite of the multiplicity of bodies, minds etc. It is therefore non-different from God. 'The Real Man is therefore one and infinite, the omnipresent spirit.'

But then, how does the Ātman acquire limitations ? Swamiji argues, consistent with Advaita metaphysics, that the limitations are only apparent for neither the body nor the mind is real. These are merely the state of flux like the columns of water in a river and hence are not real. The Self alone is one's nature. 'The infinite Self is the real name of man and he is struggling to express it in various ways.' This Self cannot be known by intellect, for all knowledge is objectification and the pure subject can never become an object.

Parallel to this line of inquiry is that of the creation of the world. The difficulties of postulating a personal God 'creating' the world are sufficiently well-known to philosophers. But the world is an undeniable factor and the question is how did this world come about. The Hegelian school argues that the Infinite is trying to express itself in the universe. But as Vivekananda pertinently asks, how can the finite express the Infinite unless It limits Itself ? The Absolute can become this universe only by limitation and how does this limitation come about ? In a lecture delivered in London, he answers this question by saying that the Absolute has become the universe by coming through time, space and causation. In the Absolute we have no time or space or causation for these categories are mental and there is no way of comprehending the Infinite except by the intellect and hence the apparent limitation. This descent, degeneracy or the phenomenalising of the Absolute is called Māyā in Hindu terminology. In the ultimate analysis, space, time and causation have no reality and so Māyā also has no reality, even as the waves of the ocean are really nothing more than the water in the ocean. The universe, therefore is only apparent, an appearance, true only for the time being, a *vivarta* of Brahman.

To the casual reader of Vivekananda, a doubt arises whether the Advaita Vedantin does not consciously or unconsciously keep separate the *vivarta* from the *pariṇāma*, the *nirguṇa, niravayava* Brahman from Brahman

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taken as a whole and consisting of parts, and whether the system is not vitiated by Māyāvāda which describes the world as an illusion. If the world is only an illusion, it is clearly non-existent and a non-existent thing cannot bind a really existent thing and then how does the question of mokṣa arise at all? If the Śruti text '*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*' is true, the world also must be taken as real, for from the real we cannot have the unreal. The Ekātmavāda should lead us to look upon all as Brahman. Thus we come to the position that either the cosmos with all its sentient and insentient beings is *real*, as real as Brahman or it is entirely unreal, as the son of a barren woman. Śankara enunciated the doctrine of *sattātraya*, to get over this dilemma, and this principle enables us to take the world as relatively real in the sense that though it is not ultimately real, it is real so long as it lasts — like the rope appearing as snake and hence we have a duty to attain Mukti. From the Pāramārthika stage and only when it is reached, the empirical world is seen to be a mere illusion, a mirage. But Swamiji introduces the ideal of service, which does not find a place in Advaita, by combining the principle of the oneness of the Absolute with the Absolute with parts. 'All this, verily is Brahman', does not mean that Brahman alone is real and the rest is nought but that everything is Brahman, though in different forms and degrees. The lower aspect must be helped to realize the higher; and the lower and the higher are non-different from each other; and when one helps another, one is only helping oneself. European scholars are always of the view that the Hindu has no ethics and that his morality is merely conditioned by the codified injunctions of religion. Inspite of the denial by the West we should remember that the ideal of service to humanity is not new to India. Vivekananda gave a new emphasis to this concept and taught that when man is served, God Himself is served. In his lecture on the 'Necessity for Religion', he argues that renunciation of the individual ego and the senses is the very basis on which ethics stands. Perfect self-annihilation is the very ideal of ethics. Nor can utilitarian standards explain morality. Spirituality alone can be its basis. Thus when I serve another I serve my own self, the only motive being service to God.

In his lectures there was another aspect which he emphasized, viz., that Vedanta was an intensely practical religion which we can apply to every aspect of our life. Thus instead of regarding religion as merely an abstract concept unrelated to and isolated from the practical world, he taught that religion was thoroughly practical. In a series of four lectures delivered in London, he discusses practical Vedanta. The goal of Vedanta is the attainment of the secret of work — real activity: this is doing one's duty without a thought of reward (*phala*). The mind must be completely calm and well-balanced. The Vedantic ideal is that man is divine (*Tattvamasi*) and hence he is not a powerless miserable sinner. He does not grow from sin to perfection but only from the less perfect to the more perfect. Though the great Śankara emphasized only the *nivṛtti mārga* to attain liberation, Vivekananda teaches that this liberation, which consists in realizing our divinity, should be striven for in all states of life, and in all its conditions. The ultimate reality is one — one only.

> 'There is but one Life, one world, one Existence. Everything is that One. The differences are of degree and not of kind. The manifoldness of the world is like a dream. This one is the Absolute, impersonal Brahman. No form of worship of this Brahman is wrong or error, it may be less perfect.'

In his concluding lecture, he movingly says:

> 'Rise, Thou Effulgent One! Rise, Thou who art always pure. Rise. Thou Birthless and Deathless one! Rise. Almighty One! manifest thy true nature. These little manifestations do not befit thee.'

This is the highest prayer that Advaita teaches.

Looking as spectators at the work done by Swami Vivekananda, nearly 60 years later, we see the immense and colossal work which he did in the cause of Hinduism. Hinduism as

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practised by the people was loaded with a useless mass of conventions, creeds and superstitions, which were merely the accumulated accretions of centuries and it was very difficult to separate the chaff from the grain and discover the radiant gems of truth. The Vedas and the Upaniṣads, no doubt lay bare the principles but even here the great difficulty is to steer clear of the commentaries and interpretations which often clashed with each other and confused the philosopher, not to speak of the lay man. Which interpretation is rational, consistent and satisfies the mystic and religious experiences of the individual? The most abstruse and higher type of non-dualism, mysticism, monism, qualified monism, dualism, pluralism — all these are taught in the Śruti, in the sense that references to these are scattered throughout in the texts. The emphasis also varied depending on the method of approach. Metaphysical and emotional approaches (Jñāna and Bhakti) clashed, besides three strata, viz. knowledge, action and contemplation, are found in the Śruti. One's psychological experiences may not exactly agree with the metaphysical truths and temperamental differences of the seers of truth may give rise to different expositions. What is basical and what is merely accidental, thus becomes very difficult to ascertain. Vivekananda had other difficulties also. He had to translate the spirit of the message of Hinduism or Vedanta in an alien language, subject to inherent limitations in concepts and their connotation, and talk to an audience not over-receptive to his lectures though they were in simple and easily understandable language. The mythology of India and the 'queer' concepts of mokṣa, reincarnation, karma and identity of Atman and Brahman, had to be expressed and rationally justified to his audience. How well the Swami succeeded in all this is very well-known. Not only was his mission a great success, and what was more important, he succeeded in presenting a unified synthesis of Hinduism. This reconstruction has made religion a major force in the life of the nation. His blunt words had a bracing effect.

> 'Religion is not talk or doctrines or theories nor is it sectarianism. Religion cannot live in sects and societies. It is the relation between the soul and God. How can it be turned into a society? ... Religion consists in realization.'

He claimed that he learned from his great Master that the religions of the world are not contradictory or antagonistic.

> 'They are but various phases of one eternal Religion.... One infinite religion has existed all through eternity and will ever exist and this Religion is expressing itself in various countries in various ways.'

From this view-point, his ascent to, what he calls, universal religion is significant. He argues that *prima facie*, there is no universality in religion seeing there is no similarity among countries in their mythology, philosophy and rituals. But he is convinced that there is a universal religion in existence even now. The universal religion runs through all the various religions of the world in the form of God. He is the thread that runs through each of the world-religions. In Him we are all one. But at the same time, since unity in diversity is the plan of the universe, there are differences in the manifestations of God. Vivekananda emphasizes that by a universal religion, he does not mean that there is to be one single ritual or philosophy or mythology for all of us. Variation is a natural necessity. At the same time religion must satisfy different types of temperaments. Thus Hinduism, of all the religions does justice to our several faculties like the cognitive, conative, affective and psychic. We have several pathways or *sādhanas* to realize the divinity within us like bhakti or piety, which satisfies the emotional type, Rajayoga, which by controlling the senses and prāṇa helps to attain realization, the karma mārga or pathway of action, which specially appeals to the extrovert and finally the jñāna mārga or philosophy, which by knowledge and insight determines our liberation. The Swami, true to the Advaitic tradition, upholds jñāna mārga but he is not fanatic about it. In his talks, he says that the

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> 'path of bhakti or devotion to the Lord is a slow process but is easy to practise... Only the path of jnana is of quick fruition and the rationale of all other creeds. But even in the path of discrimination there is the chance of the mind getting stuck in the interminable net of vain argumentations. Therefore along with this meditation should be practised.'

Hence the *sādhanas* are to be selected as suited to the temperament of the individual and there is no gainsaying the fact that each of the four is capable of carrying the votary to the promised liberation. Sri Ramakrishna reconciles all these four and says that there need be no quarrel at all between the various sects. *Jñāna karma samuccaya* is not meaningless as it is wrongly made out to be, in the hands of some of the votaries of Advaita.

It is not possible in the course of a short essay to enumerate exhaustively the contributions of Swamiji to Hinduism. The greatest contribution of his is, that he enabled the Hindu to stand erect and speak confidently about his hoary and splendid religion and culture. The attitude that Hinduism is insignificant when compared with other religions, he decisively routed and gave back our religion and culture to us even as Bhagīratha brought Ganga from celestial regions.

The life of every man is, in a manner, the life of the past. It comes to him through heredity, through surroundings, through education, through his own reincarnation — the past of the race. In a manner, the past of the earth, the past of the whole world is there, upon every soul. What are we, in the present, but a result, an effect, in the hands of that infinite past?

* * * *

We all know that God exists, and yet we do not see Him, we do not understand Him. Take one of these great Messengers of Light, compare his character with the highest ideal of God that you ever formed, and you will find that your God falls short of the ideal, and that the character of the Prophet exceeds your conceptions. If they are really, actually, higher than all our conceptions of God, what harm is there in worshipping them? Not only is there no harm, but it is the only possible and positive way of worship. However much you may try, by struggle, by abstraction, by whatsoever method you like, still so long as you are a man in the world of men, your world is human, your religion is human and your God is human. And that must be so.

* * * *

Two classes of men do not worship God as man — the human brute who has no religion, and the Paramahamsa (highest Yogi), who has gone beyond humanity, who has thrown off his mind and body, and gone beyond the limits of nature. All nature has become his Self. He has neither mind nor body, and can worship God as God, as can a Jesus or a Buddha. The other extreme is the human brute. You know how two extremes look alike. Similar is the case with the extreme of ignorance and the other extreme of knowledge; neither of these worships anybody. The extremely ignorant do not worship God, not being developed enough to feel the need for so doing. Those that have attained the highest knowledge also do not worship God — having realized and become one with God. God never worships God. Between these two poles of existence, if any one tells you he is not going to worship God as man, take care of him. He is an irresponsible talker, he is mistaken; his religion is for frothy thinkers, it is intellectual nonsense.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE OF UNIVERSALISM

P. SANKARANARAYANAN

[Prof. P. Sankaranarayanan, M.A., sometime Head of the Department of Philosophy, Vivekananda College, Madras, is presently Professor of Philosophy, the Bhavan's College, Bombay. Here in this paper he brings out the universality of Swamiji's message in an impressive manner. — *Ed.*]

Hospitable to all faiths and creeds, to all forms of life and manners of men, our country's special excellence lies in two features: a fullness of content and an inclusive wholeness. Accustomed to look on the entire mankind as one family, the genius of our country has ever been characterized by a universality which affirmed identities, denying that differences, where found, are not by any means ultimate. Reality is One, though it expresses itself variously suited to differences of the minds that try to comprehend it. The One, though expressed in the differences, includes them all in its bosom, permeates them and yet transcends them all. Of necessity, the universal has to be articulated in the alphabet of the particulars; but the universal, which is more than the particulars, cannot be exhausted by any of them. Nor is the universal an eclectic whole, a mere sum total of the particulars. There is more in the universal than is found in any particular or in all of them put together; and it is this *more* that gives strength and sustenance to the particulars, and invests them with their validity and value. Discordant as the particulars are in their separate being, as elements of the universal, they make for a harmony which the poets speak of as the music of the spheres and which the mystics feel in the ecstasy of their communion with the Supreme.

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna illustrated in his life this essential spiritual Truth of the Universal enfolding the particulars in Itself, and by a reverse process, of the particulars unfolding the Universal. *Vyaṣṭi* and *Samaṣṭi* are complementary to each other. There cannot be a wood without the component trees, even as the trees which stand in exclusive isolation cannot make a wood. As the Incarnation of God, who is the all-embracing Universal, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna embodied in himself every faith and creed, and proved by his practices and by his realizations the validity of every form of approach to the Supreme. For, every path that leads to God is not a path made by man, but has been carved out by God Himself inviting man to His Kingdom. They all stem from their common Universal. If men look down the road with their backs to the Universal, then they will see only differences which increase the distance among the paths; but, when once they turn their gaze to the Universal, the dividing distances will narrow down and ultimately disappear. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna invested this truth with the certificate of verification in the *sādhanas* that he adopted and the *siddhis* that he acquired. Swami Vivekananda, as an *antevāsin* of pre-eminent excellence to his Master, imbibed this Truth of Universalism in full measure.

Swamiji was a rationalist by instinct and a scientist by upbringing before he came under the influence of Sri Ramakrishna. He was a typical graduate of his time steeped in Mill and Spencer. Uncompromising as he was in his rationalism and scientific spirit, and probably for that very reason, he was an honest rationalist and scientist. Swamiji knew that 'the worship of the goddess of Reason during the French Revolution was not the first manifestation of that phenomenon in the history of humanity; it was a re-enactment of what had happened in ancient times; but in modern times it has assumed greater proportions.' He poses the question: 'Can religion justify itself by the discoveries of reason,

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through which every other science has justified itself?' Can the same methods of investigation which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, be applied to what he significantly called 'the Science of Religion'? Swamiji answers: 'In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of opinion that the sooner it is done the better'. He proceeds:

> 'If a religion is destroyed by such investigation, it was all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction will be the best thing that could happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt; but the essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this investigation'.[1]

Applying the principle of scientific reasoning to the realm of religion, Swamiji observes,

> 'The first principle of reasoning is that the particular is explained by the general, the general by the more general, until we come to the universal. For instance, we have the idea of *law*. If something happens and we believe that it is the effect of such and such a law, we are satisfied; that is an explanation for us. What we mean by that explanation is that it is proved that this one effect, which had dissatisfied us, is only one particular of a general mass of occurrences which we designate by the word *law*. When one apple fell, Newton was disturbed, but when he found that all apples fell, it was gravitation, and he was satisfied. This is one principle of human knowledge. I see a particular being, a human being, in the street. I refer him to the bigger conception of man, and I am satisfied; I know he is a man by referring him to the more general. So, the particulars are to be referred to the general, the general to the more general, and everything at last to the universal, the last concept that we have, the most universal — that of existence. Existence is the most universal concept'.[2]

When the Upaniṣad says *sadeva saumya idam agra āsit, agra* means not merely chronologically the first, it also means the metaphysical highest.

Swamiji proceeds:

> 'We are all human beings; that is to say, each one of us is, as it were, a particular part of the general concept, humanity. A man, and a cat, and a dog, are all animals. These particular examples, as man, or dog, or cat, are parts of a bigger and more general concept, animal. The man, and the cat, and the dog, and the plant, and the tree, all come under the still more general concept, life. Again, all these, all beings, and all materials, come under the one concept of existence, for we all are in it. This explanation merely means referring the particular to a higher concept,'[3] which, as universal, includes the particular.

Swamiji then refers to another aspect of scientific knowledge. Explanation of a thing must always come from inside it; it should be found in its own nature and does not come from outside. Swamiji points out that what is true of any part of the universe, of any particular phenomenon within it, is also true of the universe as a whole. This must be so for the reason that the universe, by definition, means the whole. The whole is the All and there is nothing outside it by which it can be explained. The explanation of the Whole must be sought in the Whole. The Whole alone must explain the Whole. No extra-cosmic reason can be found to explain the cosmos which is All. The cosmos being the All, there is nothing outside the cosmos which can be used to explain the cosmos.

Swamiji reminds us of still another aspect of scientific knowledge, which he says, is 'the manifestation of the same principle that the explanation of anything comes from inside it'. This other aspect is the law of evolution.

> 'The whole meaning of evolution', says Swamiji, 'is simply that the nature of a thing is reproduced, that the effect is nothing but the cause in another form, that all the potentialities of the effect were present in the cause, that the whole of creation is but an evolution and not a creation. That is to say, every effect is a reproduction of a preceding cause, changed only by the circumstances, and we need not go outside the universe to seek the cause of these changes; they are within. It is unnecessary to seek for any cause outside'.[4]

Swamiji points out that these two scientific principles of explanation from within, and of

[1] *Complete Works*: Vol I, p. 366.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 368-369.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 369.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 371.

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cause evolving into, or manifesting itself as the effect, may appear to undermine the basis of a deistic religion which speaks in terms of an extra-cosmic Creator of the world. Swamiji asks : 'Can there be a religion satisfying these two principles?' and replies, 'I think there can be. In the first place we have to satisfy the principle of generalization. The generalization principle ought to be satisfied along with the principle of evolution'.[5] The ultimate principle of generalization will be the most universal of all generalizations. Being universal, which means including every particular, everything else must come out of it. That implies that 'the highest, ultimate primal cause must be of the same nature as the lowest and the most distant of its effects'. The same vital pulse throbs in the acorn buried in the ground as in the leaf of the top-most twig of the heaven-kissing oak. From the infinitesimal to the Infinite, from dust to Deity, *ābrahma-pipīlikā paryantam*, one principle serves to explain everything in the universe. 'To my mind,' says Swamiji,

> 'if modern science is proving anything again and again, it is this that we are one — mentally, physically and spiritually. It is wrong to say that we are even physically different. Supposing we are materialists, for argument's sake, we shall have to come to this, that the whole universe is simply an ocean of matter of which you and I are little whirlpools. Masses of matter are coming into each whirlpool, taking the whirlpool form, and coming out as matter again. The matter that is in my body may have been in yours a few years ago, or in the sun, or may have been the matter in a plant, and so on, in a continuous state of flux. What is meant by your body and my body? It is the oneness of the body'.[6]

Every material body including ours is compacted of the five elements, the *pancabhūtas* of which the universe itself is made. As each body is a finite expression of the infinite universe, each body belongs to a community of like bodies and is one with the body of the universe. That is signified in the funeral mantra which speeds the eye of the dead person to the Sun, his breath to Vāyu, his mind to the Moon, his warmth to Fire and his dust to the Earth. They all go back to their primeval essences from which they came and of which they were made.

It is also the same with thought says Swamiji. 'It is an ocean of thought, one infinite mass, in which your mind and my mind are like whirlpools.' Swamiji illustrates this oneness of thought, of intelligence or *chit* by the fact of his thought entering the minds of his hearers. 'The whole of our lives is one; we are one even in thought.'

'Coming to a still further generalization', continues Swamiji, 'the essence of Matter and Thought is their potentiality of Spirit, this is the unity from which all have come, and that must be essentially one'. For, the Spirit sleeps in the stone, wakes in the plant, becomes conscious in the animal and knows itself in man. 'We are absolutely one; we are physically one, we are mentally one, and as spirit, it goes without saying that we are one, if we believe in spirit at all. This oneness is the fact that is being proved every day by modern science.' In his characteristic forthright manner, Swamiji declaims :

> 'To proud man it is told : you are the same as that little worm there; think not that you are enormously different from it; you are the same. You have been that in a previous incarnation and the worm has crawled up to this man of which you are so proud. This grand preaching, the oneness of things, making us one with everything that exists, is the great lesson to learn'.[7]

Thus Swamiji teaches that everything which exists, everything animate and inanimate, every living being, man, bird, beast and worm, are all the warp and the woof of the grand Universal. The relation of the parts to the whole is not one of conjunction, but it is one of inherence. It is not *samyoga*, but *samavāya*. The parts do not merely belong to the whole; they constitute the whole. The parts are nothing apart from the whole. The particular is the universal in essence. *Tat Tvamasi*. 'Thou art That', the whole. As Swamiji observes, 'He who says he is different from

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 371.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 372.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 372.

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others, even by a hair's breadth, immediately becomes miserable. Happiness comes to him who knows this oneness, who knows he is one with the Universe'.[8]

The Vedanta, Swamiji explains, embodies the religion and the philosophy of the universal. *Sarvam khalvidam brahma* : 'All this is Brahman,' means,

> 'the Brahman, the God of the Vedanta has nothing outside of itself; nothing at all. All this indeed is He: He is in the universe: He is the universe Himself. "Thou art the man, thou art the woman, thou art the old man tottering in his step." He is here. Him we see and feel; in Him we live, move and have our being.'[9]

We are all of us manifestations of that universal each from a particular centre, from a particular point of view. The universal is expressed as much in a beam of light as in the entire orb of the Sun. 'You and I', says Swamiji, 'are little bits, little channels, little expressions, all living inside that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss'.[10] We exist as particular, because the universal exists. Our intelligence is the same in kind, though small in degree, as that Universal Intelligence. Our little joys, the coloured bubbles of the tiny pools of our lives are only minute fractions of the limitless ocean of the Bliss of the Supreme Universal. As Sri Śankara, speaking of this universal that is the Brahman of the Vedanta, would have it :

> या ब्रह्मादि पिपीलिकान्त तनुषुप्रोता ।
> येन जगत् सकलं चिन्मात्र विस्तारितम् ।
> यत् सौख्यांबुधिलेशलेशत: इमे शक्रादयो निर्वृता: ।

'It is that which is the stuff of everything from the mighty Brahman to the minute worm'; 'it is the light of consciousness by which the whole world is illumined'; 'it is that ocean of bliss by a fraction of which Indra and others feel they have attained the height of their felicity.'

Swamiji paraphrases the same idea in his inimitable words compacted of truth and fervour. He says :

> 'The difference between man and man, between angels and man, between man and animals, between animals and plants, between plants and stones, is not in kind, because every one from the highest angel to the lowest particle of matter, is but an expression of that one infinite ocean, and the difference is only in degree. I am a low manifestation, you may be a higher, but in both the materials are the same. You and I are outlets of the same channel, and that is God; as such your nature is God, and so is mine. You are of the nature of God by your birthright; and so am I. You may be an angel of purity, and I may be the blackest of demons. Nevertheless my birthright is that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. So is yours. You have manifested more today. Wait, I will manifest myself more yet, for I have it all within me'.[11]

Utilising still another principle of modern science, Swamiji observes that science teaches, that what is finer and more subtle is truer than what is gross which is only an appearance, an object of perception by the senses. The finer is the truer, the gross is comparatively less true. That which is fine *par excellence,* which is most subtle, that is the ultimate Truth, the ultimate Reality. That the eye cannot see; for, as the Upaniṣad says, the eye itself sees only by That. It is That which the ear cannot hear, but it is That by which the ear hears; it is That which speech cannot describe, for it is That by which speech finds utterance. The mind too cannot conceive It; for the mind thinks only by It.

In the realm of religion, the Supreme Reality is conceived as a Personal God. Swamiji contends that the Personal God can never be a universal in the way he has taught us to think of the universal. For a Personal God has to be pitted over against a Personal Devil who militates, by the very fact of his existence against the universality of the Personal God. 'The Personal God is not a true generalization. We have to go beyond, to the Impersonal. In That, the universe exists with all its joys and miseries, for whatever exists

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 373.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] *Ibid.*
[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 373-374.

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in it has all come from the Impersonal... Both good and evil are different aspects of the same thing'[12] in varying contexts of time, place and circumstance. That which is good today, may be evil tomorrow. What is good or evil for one man may be the opposite for another. Good and evil belong to the relative world, to phenomena. And, there are those who make a compact with evil and say : 'Evil, be thou my good'. The universal is the absolute, not the relative. The Impersonal God is not a relative God ; He engulfs in His being both good and evil. To Him they are neither good or evil as such. They are the neutral fibres of His being. To us, who see darkly through our sensuous eyes, circumscribed by our outlook, they appear to our partial, and so, purblind vision, as good or evil. The true Universal is beyond good and evil. As the poet said, 'there is nothing good or evil but thinking makes it so'.

Swamiji assures us that this view does not make short work of the Personal God. For, the Impersonal is the ground of the Personal. The Personal God will remain as an object of worship and prayer, but on a better basis. The universe in its various forms, divine and human are only various readings of the same Impersonal. The Personal God is the highest reading that can be attained to, of that Impersonal, by the human intellect.

Swamiji goes on to explain :

> 'When the Vedanta says you and I are God, it does not mean the Personal God. To take an example, out of a mass of clay, a huge elephant of clay is manufactured, and out of the same clay, a little clay mouse is made. Would the clay mouse ever be able to become the clay elephant? But put them both in water and they are both clay ; as clay they are both one, but as mouse and elephant there will be an eternal difference between them.'[13]

The Infinite, the Impersonal is like the clay in the example. To know the Personal, one must first know the Impersonal. If you know the clay, you can know the clay elephant and the clay mouse. Nay more, knowledge of the Impersonal makes for a better understanding of the Personal.

Every one of us then is in essence only the Impersonal. Particularizations in the form of body, race, nationality, sex, caste, profession, status etc. divide and demarcate the Universal constraining it into limitations which disrupt its wholeness and detract from its fullness. Each of us is the whole, would we but know it. And then we would not speak of ourselves as Devadatta or Yajnadatta, as John or Jane, but in the plenum of the universal as we would each one of us exclaim :

अहं निर्विकल्पो निराकाररूपो विभुः।

'It is self-evident to my senses that I am one with the universe. I am one with the air that surrounds me, one with heat, one with light, eternally one with the whole Universal Being, the eternal subject in the heart who says, "I am the deathless one, the sleepless one, ever awake, the immortal, whose glory never dies, whose powers never fail. I am one with That".' शिवः केवलोऽहं, शिवोऽहं, शिवोऽहम्।

The world will be a better place to live in, for it will be filled by better people if we realize that the True is the Universal and that the partial and particular are but segments of that Truth. Then, says Swamiji, 'the whole life of man will be changed'. That soul is strong that realizes this universal, that has become one with it. This sense of identity with the universal invests one with the strength born of dispassion, with wisdom born of enlightenment, with a joy born of renunciation. Swamiji declares, 'that soul is strong which has become one with the Lord ; none else is strong'. It is this strength of soul which he refers to when he quotes the Upaniṣadic text :

नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः।

Addressing his English audience, Swamiji said :

> 'In your own Bible, what do you think was the cause of that strength of Jesus of Nazareth, that immense infinite strength which laughed at

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 375.
[13] *Ibid.*, p. 378.

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traitors and blessed those that were willing to murder him. It was that "I and my Father are one"; it was that prayer, "Father, just as I am one with you, so make them all one with me."'[14]

Such a man who has realized his individual Self to be one with the Universal Self is called *ātmavān*. The strength of the spirit known as *Brahmatejas* courses in his veins, vitalizes his entire frame; he becomes a veritable dynamo of the spirit radiating spiritual energy all round him. His very breath is a benediction, his words are wisdom, and his every act becomes a consecration. The altar at which he worships is of the Impersonal God who requires no demonstrations, no proofs. For He is closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet. 'He is in the heart of our hearts,' says Swamiji, 'Bodies and minds change; misery, happiness, good and evil come and go; days and years roll on; life comes and goes; but He dies not'.

The Vedas declare:

वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्तं आदित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्।

'I know that great Puruṣa, resplendent like the Sun, beyond darkness.' The darkness is the darkness of ignorance and when that is dispelled by discipline, dispassion and discrimination, one knows the Puruṣa in the heart and, to know Him is to be Him. *Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati.*

And, finally as Swamiji says:

'In that supreme universal Puruṣa and through Him we know everything. In Him and through Him we see everything. In Him and through Him we sense, we think, we live and we are. And that "I" which we mistake to be a little "I" limited, is not only my "I", but yours, the "I" of everyone, of the animals, of the angels, of the lowest of the low. That "I am" is the same in the murderer as in the saint, the same in the rich as in the poor, the same in man as in woman, the same in man as in animals. From the lowest amoeba to the highest angel, He resides in every soul, and eternally declares, "I am He, I am He". (सोऽहम्, सोऽहम्।) When we have understood that voice eternally present there, when we have learnt this lesson, the whole universe will have expressed its secret. Nature will have given up her secret to us. Nothing more remains to be known. Thus we find that truth for which all religions search, that all this knowledge of material sciences are but secondary. (यं लब्ध्वा चापरं लाभं मन्यते नाधिकं ततः।) That is the only true knowledge which makes us one with this Universal God of the Universe.'[15]

A word may be added about the social, political and religious implications of this universalism. Seeing that the universal is the truth and the particulars apart from it do not constitute the whole truth, it is the part of particulars not to fight with one another, but to co-exist co-operatively for the realization of the Spirit of the universal. In this context, therefore, social differences need not make for jealousies, rivalries and exploitations. Politics need not be a race for extirpation and domination, and Religion need not mean fanaticism and intolerance. As Swamiji said in his Chicago Address:

'Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendent fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be more advanced than it is now'.

Let us hope with the advent of Swamiji that the death-knell of all fanaticism at all levels and of all kinds has been tolled and that all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal will disappear. Swami Vivekananda's Message of Universalism had never a more insistent significance at any time than it has today. The world will be celebrating his birth centenary to real purpose only if it reminds itself of this message and translates it in the details of daily conduct of its people in small things as in great.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 380.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 381.

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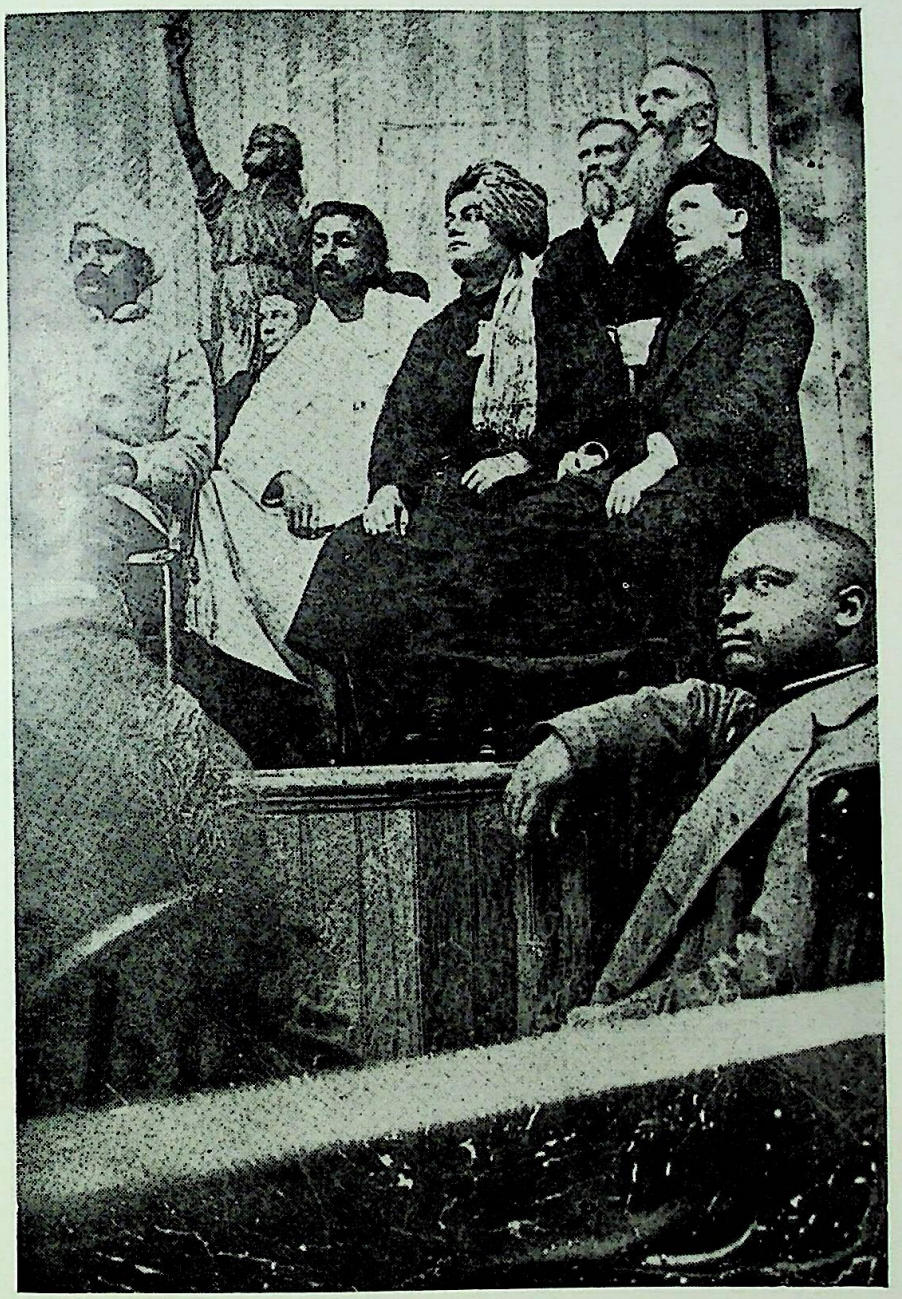

Vivekananda with some of the delegates on the dais at the Parliament of Religions (1893). (*By courtesy*: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.)

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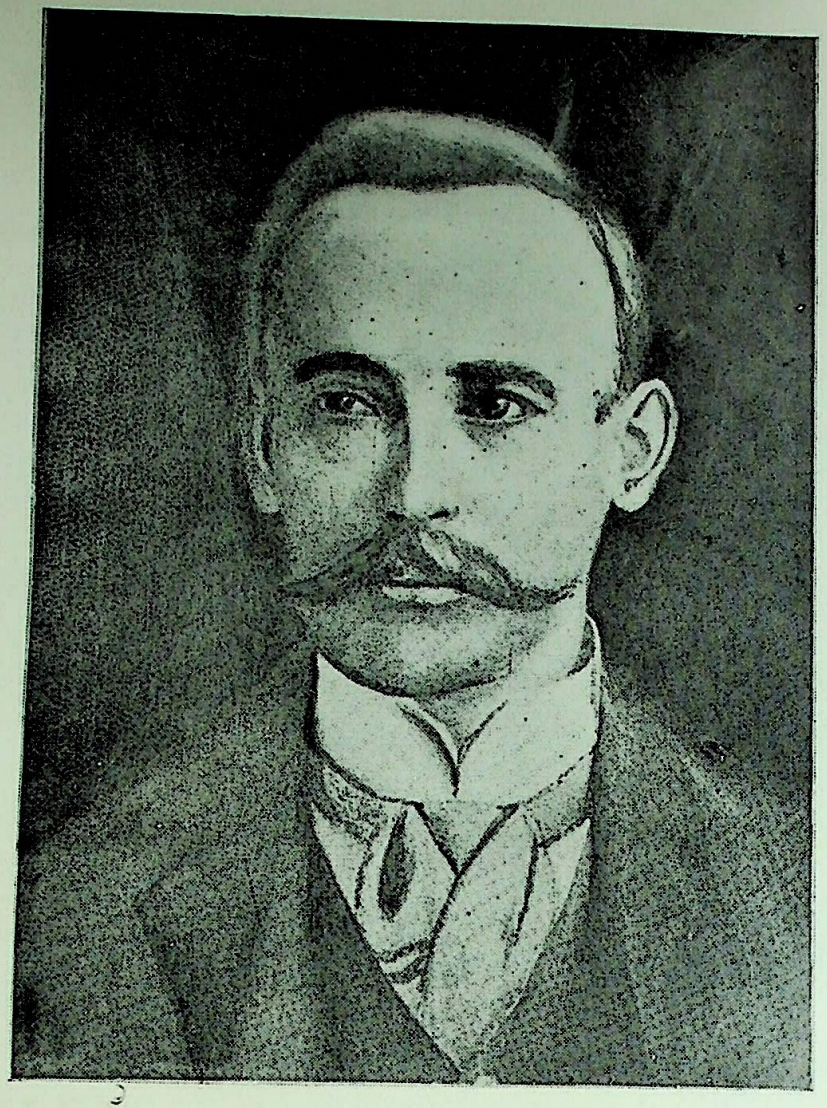

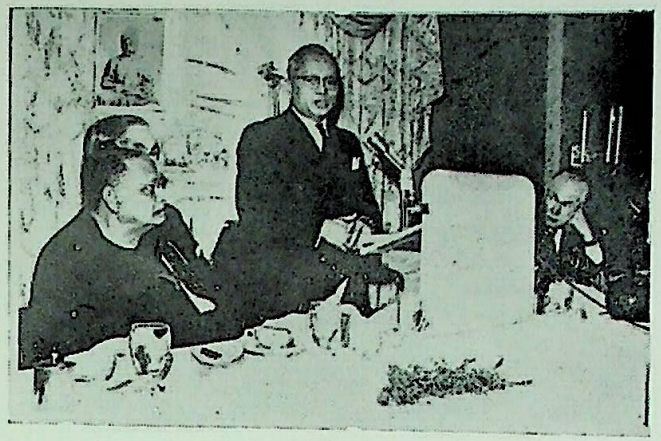

U. Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations, addressing the guests at the dinner held by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, at the Warwick Hotel, on March 28, 1963 to celebrate the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda. (See pages 305-307 for his speech.)

← MR. J. J. GOODWIN

(One of the Western disciples of Swamiji. He took shorthand notes of a good many of Swamiji's extempore lectures and has made them available to us. He followed Swamiji to India but passed away at a very early age, at Ootacamund, in 1898. Swamiji was very much moved by his death and wrote in memorium to Goodwin the poem 'Requiescat in Pace'.)

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BACK TO THE UPANISADS

PRAVRAJIKA ATMAPRANA

[Pravrajika Atmaprana is a monastic member of Sri Sarada Math, Dakshineshwar. Her book on Sister Nivedita is a scholarly work and was duly appreciated by the Government of India as such. In this short appreciation she shows how Swamiji took us back to the message of the Upaniṣads. — *Ed.*]

As a person who is hit hard on the head feels stunned and remains inactive for sometime, this country of ours, oppressed by successive invasions and conquests by outsiders lay quite dazed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The impact of alien civilizations and the newness and strangeness of foreign thought and conduct bewildered her, with the loss of her freedom, even to react against conditions; she lost her joy, hope and virility.

When gradually in the first quarter of the nineteenth century she revived from the effects of the repeated blows, the learned and sensitive minds of the best of her children realized that she must be made strong again. Tutored by the foreigners they began to search for the causes of degeneration in the social, economic, cultural and religious life of the people of the country, and started to think in terms of reforms and readjustments — such as would suit the modern ways of life about which they had learnt from the English. With unbounded zeal the social reformers, religious reformers and political workers became active, taking upon themselves the task of re-building India. Their way was more negative than constructive and they started by condemning and abusing orthodoxy.

Against an array of these great reformers stood only one, whose solitary voice — clear and strong — put a stop to this destructive attitude. He was Swami Vivekananda. He had the prophetic eye to see that India contained within herself sufficient forces to bring about a resurgence and that tit-bit reforms would do her no good. Sister Nivedita so aptly described him as 'the worker at foundations'. He said, 'Aye, children, to try to remedy evils is not the true way.... My own experience has taught me that. Therefore I cannot join anyone of these condemning societies. Why condemn? ... To the reformers I will point out that I am a greater reformer than any one of them. They want to reform only little bits. I want root-and-branch reform. Where we differ is in the method. Theirs is the method of destruction, mine is that of construction. I do not believe in reform; I believe in growth.... Feed the national life with the fuel it wants, but the growth is its own.'

No extraneous forces can help the growth of an individual or a race or a nation, as do the slow-going yet formative forces of its own national life. What is the life-centre of our country — what is her life-force? More than once has Swamiji said that it is religion and religion alone. 'In India, religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life; and if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality, the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries — that nation dies, if it succeeds in the attempt.'

Swamiji offers no apology for accepting religion or spirituality as our ideal as do some modern minds. On the contrary he stoutly supports the choice made by us in trying to solve the world-riddle by developing an intense faith in God and the Eternal Soul, an intense aversion for the world and belief in the power of renunciation.

न प्रजया न धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः ।

'Not by progeny, not by wealth, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached.' —

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this is the direction shown to the world by India while the other countries have tried to solve their problems on the material plane, and have all failed in the past. Our whole national mind is imbued with the ideal proclaimed as far back as in the days of the Upaniṣads :—

ईशावास्यमिदꣳसर्वं यत्किंच जगत्यां जगत् ।
तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥

Swamiji not only preaches this ideal, he goes a step further and warns the country, 'Mark you, if you give up that spirituality, leaving it aside to go after the materializing civilization of the West, the result will be that in three generations you will be an extinct race; because the backbone of the nation will be broken, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built will be undermined, and the result will be annihilation all round.'

The modern materialistic minded person may not accept it but it is a fact that, while hosts of other powerful nations have died, India still survives, because of this life-force of hers. And so even after years of stress and strain she proves herself to be not old and effete, but full of energy and hope. She is building up her lost strength by integrating all the different elements that went to make her great in the past.

It is Swamiji's philosophy of mobility and vitality, built on the message of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* — चरैवेति —'move on'—which is helping India to go forward today. It is he who pointed out that the way to go forward is to look at the past. The two propositions may seem incompatible, but they are not. Out of the past is built the future and hence *recognition* of that past greatness alone can breathe life into the nation.

The Upaniṣads teach us that spiritual awareness of the divinity of man alone can bring about a synthesis of the physical, mental and spiritual forces that are in him. Intellectual attainment or physical vigour by themselves are not sufficient to help in harmonizing the different elements that build a man's life. Nor do material possessions alone give happiness. It is unfortunate, however, that the modern man in India has forgotten this and as a result has lost the joy and radiance of a full life. Bereft of spiritual awareness he has no aim to realize, no faith to live by.

In his brilliant exposition of Vedanta, Swamiji has told us what the Upaniṣads can teach us and has preached their message of love, freedom and fearlessness. 'Bold, brave, beyond the conception of the present day, stand the giant minds of the Sages of the Upaniṣads, declaring the noblest truths that have ever been preached to humanity, without any compromise, without any fear. This, my countrymen, I want to lay before you.... Go back to your Upaniṣads, the shining, the strengthening, the bright philosophy, and part from all these mysterious things, all these weakening things. Take up this philosophy; the greatest truths are the simplest things in the world, simple as your own existence. The truths of the Upaniṣads are before you. Take them up, live up to them, and the salvation of India will be at hand.'

Thus in the Upaniṣads alone, according to Swamiji, has the nation to search for the meaning of life. The Upaniṣads will also bring to light the truth that spirituality consists not in meaningless rituals or vain philosophical speculations — but richer inner life. Their message of renunciation which presupposes an intense spirit of sacrifice for aspiring after Truth and Freedom has a great significance in it and India will have to hold on to it till the end of time.

If India heeds Swamiji's words while she is busy building her strength anew she will one day become greater than she ever was.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE

K. CHANDRASEKHARAN

[Sri K. Chandrasekharan, M.A., B.L., Advocate and *litterateur*, Madras is not unknown to the readers of The *Vedanta Kesari*. He brings out in this paper Swamiji's concept of service in a telling manner. — *Ed.*]

'In various Upaniṣads we find that this Vedanta philosophy is not the outcome of meditation in the forests only, but that the very best parts of it were thought out and expressed by brains which were busiest in everyday affairs of life,'[1] declared Swami Vivekananda to a Western audience. The reference was to monarchs of the type of Janaka to whom Shuka went for instructions regarding realization of Truth, or of the type of Pravahana Jaivali of Pānchālas to whom Gautama, son of Aruni, went for instructions regarding life after death and transmigration. The emphasis the Swami wanted to lay was on the practicality of Vedanta. It is only while engaged in the conflicts of life that one can also develop the detachment required for realization of the fundamentals of existence and its goal. His terse way of putting it was always *Nivṛtti* in *Pravṛtti* i.e., detachment in action.

According to him, a life divorced from religion or spirituality will not be worth living. For, unless the ideal of philosophy infuses a person, he cannot speculate merely upon it as of any real value. Further, if philosophy is not of a practical kind, surely it could not have been conceived at all in the human brain. It is amidst the strifes and struggles of life that man also gets the urge for acquiring peace of mind. Without the scorching rays of the sun, no need will be felt for the cool shades of the tree. Indeed, it is not without significance that the Bhagavad-Gītā (Lord's song) emanated on the battle-field — a place for action and action alone. The kernel of the celestial song turns upon action incessantly or performance of one's duties, while resigning oneself to a Higher Power for the results, whatever they be.

Striving for betterment without aiming at rewards can easily strike a person, unfamiliar with the age-long tenets of Hindu philosophy, as incomprehensible and robbing one of the natural inducement for action. Ambition and passion alone are normally capable of acting as spurs to anyone's attempts to gain the good things of life. Otherwise, there may not be the intensity of endeavour to achieve or accomplish a task. Well, it is here the Vedanta steps in to clear the mind, of obsessions, and lead it towards what is the ultimate goal of all endeavour and the purpose of man's career on earth.

The Hindu philosophy is beautiful in stimulating the man of action not to lose heart in his strivings. If results should always crown one's efforts, then there is no need for him to pause for thinking. It is because often times disappointments and unexpected reversals happen, while treading even the path of duty, that the philosophy of working without attachment to results saves man from the effects of inaction and untoward reactions. He is forced to introspect and probe the mystery of a higher Ordinance, ruling lives and their work here.

The imminent need of the world, according to the Swami, is the grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the universe or creation. The Indian thought has graphically speculated upon the principle of *samaṣṭi* or ocean of matter in which everything, whether the sun or the moon or the stars are all but little wavelets. Again it has also formulated the basic concept that 'behind the idea of the unity of the whole show, the real soul is also One'.

[1] *Swami Vivekananda's works* (Vol II) *Practical Vedanta* (8th Edition) p. 290.

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The ever melting heart and the ever alert mind of the Swami were both switched on to a tremendous employment of their capacities in the cause of the uplift of the masses of India. Their dire poverty and backwardness in all respects, engaged his attention so much that without alleviating their unenviable condition he could feel no rest which he so much deserved. He even conceived of the practical application of the Advaitic philosophy as conducive to the solution of the acute problem facing the country. The oneness of all life should appeal to all hearts and move them to help others needing succour. In its eternal sanction of all morality should arise the feeling 'that you and I are not only brothers, but that you and I are really one'. This identity can be felt through love also. The Swami gave an illustration of such love and its ways from a poem of a Sufi poet. The story is that a lover came and knocked at the door of his beloved and sought entrance. 'Who is there?' came the query; 'I am' answered the lover. The door remained unopened. A second time the lover knocked at the door. Again to the question 'Who is there?' he gave the reply 'I am so and so'. The door was as much closed as before. Hence a third attempt the lover made, saying in reply: 'I am thou, my love', when the door was flung open. The mystical interpretation is easy of grasp, that the spiritual awakening will be only complete when all feeling of separateness from every other being gets submerged or annihilated in one. If the Western world needs it for curing it of its rampant nationalism, India much more requires the message for saving the downtrodden masses from the abject penury and distress they are undergoing.

The political slavery of his days, added to the backwardness of the vast population of India, happened to consume every bit of his immediate attention. No sooner was he back from the West amidst his own *Gurubhāis*, disciples of the *Paramahamsa*, than he struck upon organizing the Sri Ramakrishna Mission, where monks of the Order would not only renounce the householder's life but pledge themselves to work, such as relieving the country of poverty, famine, epidemics, insanitation and lack of education. How much still fresh and inspiring are his words, uttered six or seven decades back:

> 'What our country wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face in every fashion. That is what we want, and that can only be created, established and strengthened, by understanding and reaching the ideal of the Advaita, that ideal of the Oneness of all.'[2]

Let us just view how Swami Vivekananda behaved after the signal success of his mission to the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. The unprecedented ovation his first speech received as well as the unusual and continued recognition of his invincible personality at the hands of foreigners, did not go to his head. For not even a moment was he feeling elated with his initial success, but kept his mind uninfluenced by the contrast in affluence and material advance the new country presented. On the other hand, whenever he was afforded a welcome befitting royalty, he was meek and remembering his own poor country with its great population, steeped not only in indigence but ignorance as well. It is recorded by his chroniclers how one night when he was lying on a downy bed at a wealthy host's guest-room, his thoughts flew back to his own countrymen, and unable to bear the feelings gushing in his heart for their abject state, he rolled to the ground weeping all the while, and broke out in words wringing out his heart's blood: 'O Mother, what do I care for name and fame when my motherland remains sunk in utmost poverty! . . . who will raise the masses of India? Who will give them bread? Show me, show me, oh Mother, how can I help them?'[3]

The *Daridra-Narayanas* of his country became the precious possession of his entire heart. He dwelt upon schemes that would pro-

[2] *Complete Works*: Vol. III. page 190.
[3] *Life of Swami Vivekananda* (By his Eastern & Western Disciples).

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mote the welfare of the masses. He thought of starting homes for the poor, the sick and the forlorn. He planned for organizations which would be manned by devoted and zealous workers drawn from the Ramakrishna Order of monks. For, to him it appeared the work to serve the poor and the sick was the easiest and surest path to self-realization. Once a young man approached him complaining that however much he closed his eyes in meditation and sat all by himself in a solitary cell, he could not have even a glimpse of the haven of serenity he was panting for. The Swami, in his characteristic manner of impressing listeners by his inordinate power of conviction, uttered :

> 'If you take my word, you will have first of all to open the door of your house ; then you have to serve to the best of your ability ; one who is ill and has no one to look after him, for him you will have to take medicine and diet and nurse him ; one who has nothing to eat, you will have to feed him ; one who is ignorant, you will have to teach him, well-educated as you are. My advice to you is, if you want peace of mind, you have to serve others in this way as best as you can.' [4]

The orthodox Advaitin may find this philosophy of service preached by the Swami a bit removed from what has come down to us from the greatest Advaitins as the path for the Jñāni. So long as the Ātman is said to be without quality or form and the only existing One impregnating all creation, the theory of service or the concept of two entities, the server and the served as distinct, may appear knocking out the bottom of the philosophy of Advaita. A clever inquirer asked him the question : 'You talk of service, charity and doing good to the world ; these are, after all, in the domain of Māyā. When, according to Vedanta, the goal of man is attainment of Mukti by breaking all bondage, what is the use of preaching things which help the mind on mundane matters ?' [5] Instantaneously his answer shattered the catechiser : 'Is not the idea of Mukti also in the domain of Māyā ? Does not the Vedanta teach that the Ātman is ever free ? What is striving for Mukti to the Ātman, then ?' Indeed, the Swami in thus replying was not stifling a legitimate doubt. He was only thinking on the lines of what one finds in the *Gauda-pāda-kārika* :

> न बद्धो न च साधकः न मुमुक्षुः नैव मुक्तः इत्येषा परमार्थता ॥

> (Neither bondsman, nor achiever, neither aspirer after liberation, nor even a liberated one : thus it is the most real of truths.)

Service to humanity, the Swami evidently resorted to, as a panacea for all the ills of *avidyā* the soul is subject to. The *Samskāras*, of which the Vedas speak and the Upaniṣads dilate upon for cleansing the soul of the accumulation of dross by its residence in bodies, can also include service to humanity in all social and intellectual matters as a more appropriate item in the programme for the regeneration of Man. *Chittasuddhi* as a preparatory stage for the career of the soul in its evolution towards higher planes, can be certainly acquired in so many ways. Says the *Yoga Sūtra* :

> मैत्री करुणा मुदितोपेक्षाणां भावनातः चित्तप्रसादनम्।

> (Friendly understanding, compassion, cheer and forgiveness are all contributions to the purity of mind.)

Similarly, service to one's own countrymen will deliver one out of his ego and self-centredness. Patriotism must have its source in the desire to save the starving millions. Hence, in words of fire, he exhorted :

> 'Love opens the most impossible gates ; love is the gate to all the secrets of the universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, would-be patriots ! Do you feel ? Do you feel that millions and millions of the descendants of Gods and sages have become next-door neighbours to brutes ? Do you feel millions are starving to-day and millions have been starving for ages ?.... Have you forgotten all about your name, your fame, your

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 486.
[5] *Ibid.*

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wives, your children, your property, even your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to becoming a patriot.'[6]

In a greater mood of self-effacement flowed words from him thus: 'Who cared about this Parliament of Religions? Here are my own flesh and blood sinking every day, and who cared for them? This was my first step.'[7]

Once or twice he even tried to convince his followers of the capacity of soul-force exerting itself from a distance and through the hardest of enclosures even. Swami Vivekananda told some of his countrymen: 'If you live in a cave, your thoughts will permeate even through the stone walls, go vibrating all over the world for hundreds of years, may be, until they will catch hold of some brain, and work out there. Such is the power of thought, of sincerity, and of purity of purpose.'[8]

So the Swami never afterwards failed to harp on the words: 'I have come my children, to tell you all my plans; if you hear them I am ready to work with you. If you hear them not, even kick me out of India, I'll come back and tell you that we are all sinking.'[9] The burning sincerity of his purpose cannot be better expressed than in his own words, which even when read seem to possess wings and soar high before our very eyes.

The splendid record of the Sri Ramakrishna Mission's humanitarian services speaks volumes of the sure and steady foundations laid by Swamiji himself. His own philosophy of service served as a hand-maid to his active propaganda for Advaita itself. He reconciles the two philosophies also in his own inimitable manner:

'Do good to others! Where is the explanation? Why is it that all great men have preached the brotherhood of mankind, and greater men the brotherhood of all lives? Because, whether they are conscious of it or not, behind all that, through all their irrational and personal superstitions, was peering forth the eternal light of the Self denying all manifoldness, and asserting that the whole universe is but one.'[10]

Further he added by way of reconciling even the other philosophical systems such as Dwaita (dualism) and Viśiṣṭādvaita (qualified non-dualism) by saying:

'The Advaitin does not say dualism is wrong; it is a right view, but a lower one. It is on the way to truth; therefore let everybody work out his own vision of this universe, according to his own ideas; injure none, deny the position of none; take man where he stands and, if you can, lend him a helping hand and put him on a higher position, but do not injure and do not destroy. All come to truth in the long run.'[11]

How great and true are his words and how much more practical his *philosophy of service* to humanity, whether it be to bring relief in food, in education, in eradication of disease and poverty, in whatever way it be! Every kind of service to others is indissolubly wedded to the basic concept of *oneness* of all life; and the optimism informing his words are worth repetition a thousand times:

'When man has seen himself as one with the Infinite being of the universe, when all separateness has ceased, when all men and women, all Gods and angels, all animals and plants and the whole universe has melted into that Oneness, then all fear disappears.'

[6] *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol III, p. 225.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 226.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 227.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 227.
[10] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, (8th Edn.) Atman p. 252.
[11] *Ibid.*, Vol. II 8th Edn., Atman, p. 253.

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VIVEKANANDA: THE HERO-PROPHET OF THE MODERN WORLD

VISHWANATH PRASAD VARMA

[Dr. Vishwanath Prasad Varma, M.A. (Patna), M.A. (Columbia), PH.D. (Chicago), is Director, Institute of Public Administration, Patna University. His scholarly articles have appeared in the *Vedanta Kesari*, from time to time. In this article Dr. Varma deals with Swamiji's contribution to world-thought and kindred topics and lastly shows how as hero-prophet Swamiji has influenced many a great mind and still continues to do so. — *Ed.*]

The personality of Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) was a mighty, majestic and comprehensive personality. Although of athletic muscular build, he had a mystic consciousness attuned with the absolute of the monistic idealists. But simultaneously he was a gigantic intellectual, thoroughly at home in the greatest secrets of metaphysical Vedantism, European philosophy and elements of modern science, and had a burning enthusiasm for the alleviation of human suffering. The person who could perform the colossal feat of mastering the first eleven volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (out of a total of twenty) had also a luminous and passionate urge to experience directly the ecstatic absorption with the subject-objectless (*asamprajnāta*) beatific supernal state. The late Brajendra Nath Seal testifies to the deep and restless passion of Vivekananda to apprehend the highest truth from his early young days. Although the Swami was a revered teacher of the monistic Vedanta, still the devotional mood — characteristic of the great Vedantic Acharyas like Madhava and Vallabha — was also prominent in his person. The world knows him as a gigantic mind who employed his stupendous will-power and energy to bring about a regeneration of India.[1] This monk, social energist and humanist philanthropist wanted, as he said, to fall on the society like an avalanche. He was a pilgrim of the city of God and a warrior for the cause of the suppressed. Hence the Swami's personality was unique in its comprehensiveness and deep sensitiveness to the evils prevalent in the socio-economic and moral structure of the country. He preached both monastic asceticism and social service. His intellectual vision was immensely clear and he could penetrate into the currents and cross-currents that were manifested in the history of India. Before his vigorous mind everything from the Ṛgveda to Kālidāsa and Kant and Spencer was clear and luminous.[2] He claimed to have realized the supracosmic truth but still he worked with the strength of a lion. His soul gave one the impression not of the silent 'Puruṣa' of the Sānkhya but of

[1] The intense nationalism and patriotism of Vivekananda is revealed in this declaration of his: 'For the next fifty years.... let all other vain Gods disappear for that time from our minds. This is the only God that is awake, our own race, everywhere His hands, everywhere His feet, everywhere His ears, He covers everything. All other Gods are sleeping. What vain Gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the God that we see all round us, the *Viraat*?... The first of all worship is the worship of the *Viraat* — of those all around us.... These are all our Gods, — men and animals, and the first Gods we have to worship are our own countrymen.....' ("The Future of India").

[2] Dr. B. N. Seal (in an article in the *Prabuddha Bharata*, 1907) says that the early optimistic theism which Vivekananda had imbibed from the Brahmo Samaj was shaken by his study of John Stuart Mill's *Three Essays on Religion*. He was also familiar with the sceptical philosophy of Hume. But more than the writings of philosophers, Shelley's Hymn to the spirit of Intellectual Beauty moved him. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Advaita Ashrama, 1933), pp. 92-93. Vivekananda had studied Kant and Schopenhauer, Mill and Spencer. He also probed into the writings of the ancient Aristotelian school. For sometime he had found intellectual consolation in the positivism of Comte. *Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, 'The Man in the Making', p. 87. But Vivekananda found final satisfaction neither in Platonic immutable ideas nor in Hegel's dialectical immanentism and universal Reason but in the Vedanta of the monistic school.

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the active *Atman* of the Vaiśeṣika as also of the *Atman* of the Upaniṣads — the supreme energizer of the cosmic manifestation. It appeared as if the '*vīrya*' and '*ojas*' of the Mahabharatan heroes and the stalwart protagonists of Hindu imperialism in the days of the Mauryas and the Guptas was combined in his magnificent personality, with the spiritual '*tejas*' characteristic of the ancient seers of the Veda and Vedanta. Hence the Swami was able to achieve miraculous success in his mission in a short life-time of only thirty-nine years.

The triumphant marches of Swami Vivekananda the 'Hindu Napoleon',[3] in the American continent and Europe demonstrated to the people that Hinduism had grown once more vigorous and was intent upon making a spiritual, moral and cultural-philosophical propaganda in the world. Asia had given to Europe the main elements of religion and culture in the past (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Oriental influences on Roman religion, Islam in the Iberian Peninsula, — also the influence of Vedantic thought on Thoreau and on the transcendental Over-soul of Emerson) and Asia wanted once more to provide moral inspiration to Europe. Vivekananda's powerful and eloquent orations on the stage of the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in September 1893 gave to our motherland a new self-confidence which is the true psychological precursor of an independent foreign policy. The nefarious game of Europeanization of this land of the sages received a great challenge. Hence Vivekananda succeeded in imparting a dynamic and heroic spiritual fervour to the formation of the culture-complex of India.[4] The same vigour which Luther and Calvin had imparted to Western Europe seemed to be infused by Vivekananda in the passive calm of the contemporary Indian civilization.[5] There is no doubt that the influence of Vivekananda on some of the leaders of Bengal like Aurobindo and Subhas Bose was deep.

Hinduism as a Universal Religion

The Swami made a distinct and notable contribution to world religion, in his championship of Hinduism as a universal gospel of ethical humanism and spiritual idealism. Hinduism had been the subject of intense misrepresentation at the hands of Christian missionaries who suffered from 'imperialism-complex' and were actuated with a sense of burden to 'civilize' the black men and brown men by clearing the road for the economic exploitation of Asia and Africa (as can be seen from a study of the rise of modern imperialism from 1870). But Hinduism was, to Vivekananda, a comprehensive gospel, which could shelter within its bosom the profound philosophic intellect by its Nyāya, Sāmkhya and Vedanta; could offer to the psychologist its vast store of psychic wisdom of the *Rājayoga*; could inspire the devotee, (with the enchanted hymns of the *Sāmaveda* and the devotional songs of Tulsidas or of the Alvars and Nayanmars, the saints of the South); and finally could give to the puissant and hectic worker the doctrine of selfless action as enunciated in the celestial song of Sri Krishna. Hinduism did not mean to him the cluster of obscure cults and ritualistic superstitions, orthodox dogmas and primitive ceremonialism, which unfortunately the superficial European critic is very keen in observing. It signified to him a body of moral and spiritual injunctions and primordial supertemporal laws for the uplift of humanity —

एते जातिदेशकालसमयानवच्छिन्नाः सार्वभौमाः
महाव्रतम् ।

To him Hinduism was the mother of all religions and this can be, to a great extent,

[3] Due to his heroic mood and sometimes even domineering character Vivekananda was called 'the Hindu Napoleon'. R. Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 19, says 'within him there was a Napoleon'.

[4] Vivekananda once declared: 'Expansion is life, contraction is death'. (*Works*, Vol. IV, p. 311).

[5] The heroic action of leaders of modern Indian renaissance like Dayananda and Vivekananda reminds me of the personalities of St. Paul, Kalipha Omar and Martin Luther.

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demonstrated historically. The ancient Vedic religion influenced Buddhism, and the latter was possibly a potent factor in the rise of Christianity. The older Vedic religion also influenced the religion of Persia and Media and the reformist ethical movement which began in Judea in the 6th century B.C. was inspired by some aspects of the Western Asiatic religions (of Persia and India) which the Jews came to learn during the Babylonian Captivity. The researches that are being carried into the antique history of Egypt and Western Asia are demonstrating the cultural penetration of ancient Indian religion in far-off lands. In the Tell-el-Amarna letters (c. 1380-1350 B.C.) we come across Vedic names, e.g. 'Artamanya' which, according to Keith, certainly suggests 'Ṛtamanya' (A. B. Keith, *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1936, p. 573). The 'Ṛta' is a vital concept of ancient Indian philosophy. The Mittanian gods (referred to in records of about 1400 B.C.) have a nomenclature which is definitely Vedic.

Vivekananda was a representative of entire Hinduism from the Vedas to Vaiṣṇavism. He did not emphasize the Samhitas of the Veda to the same extent as did the late great Swami Dayananda. He was impressed greatly by the *'Jñānakānda'* of the Upaniṣads. The universalism of Vivekananda reminded one of the catholic culture of Aśoka. He had been brought up under the influence of his teacher Ramakrishna whose whole personality was a demonstration and vindication of the inherent spiritual truths in all the various religions.

He defined religion as the vital and moral force which gives life to a person or to a nation.[6] In thundering words he said, 'Strength is life, weakness is death'. Jawaharlal Nehru in his *The Discovery of India* has pointed out that the great refrain of Vivekananda's teachings was *abhayam*, (fearlessness). The Mundakopaniṣad says '*nāyamātmā balahīnena labhyaḥ.*' Vivekananda wanted to make a harmonious fusion of the Kshatriya manhood and Brahmana intellectualism. He shunned all weakening mysteries. Melamed in his *Spinoza and Buddha* wants to differentiate between Hebraism and Hinduism and says that the former is individualistic, theistic, optimistic and presents an anthropocentric view of the world. As distinct from it, the latter is universalistic, pessimistic, cosmocentric and world-negating. These generalizations are born out of a superficial study of Indian history and philosophy. The creators of Mauryan imperialism and Maratha polity were not vague sentimentalists. Vivekananda, although a monist, always stood for vigorous and valiant action in the secular sphere and heroically inculcated that absolute bravery and firm, bold faith could create history.

Vedantism and Ethics

European critics level the charge against Indian philosophy of being indifferent to ethics. Dr. A. B. Keith has the boldness to say: 'In comparison with the intellectual activity of the Brāhmaṇas the ethical content of the Upaniṣads must be said to be negligible and valueless.... they (the Brāhmaṇas) have completely failed to see that morality is the most objective and essential part of philosophy'.[7] But Vivekananda and Ram Tirtha

[6] In heroic words Vivekananda declared: 'But this is not the time with us to weep, even in joy; we have had weeping enough; no more is this the time for us to become soft. This softness has been with us till we have become like masses of cotton.... *What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills, which nothing can resist,* which.... will accomplish their purpose in any fashion, even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. That is what we want, and that can only be created, established, and strengthened, by understanding and realizing the ideal of the Advaita, that ideal of the oneness of all. Faith, faith, faith in ourselves.... If you have faith in the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners.... have introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves and stand up on that faith.... Why is it that we, three hundred and thirty millions of people, have been ruled for the last thousand years by any and every handful of foreigners?.... Because they had faith in themselves and we had not....' (From the lecture, "The Mission of the Vedanta") *Works*, Vol. III. p. 190.

[7] A. B. Keith: *Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishad*, pp. 584-585.

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have pointed out in their American lectures that the Vedantic metaphysic which teaches spiritual equality[8] is the real guarantee of an equal treatment to the vast masses of men. The French Revolution taught liberty and equality, but it degenerated into the despotic imperialisms of Napoleons I and III. After all, genuine ethics and social morality are meant for good behaviour and the development of freedom, right self-consciousness and good in the world. The Vedantic metaphysics does not neutralize the subjective disposition to ethical life because of its *Māyāvāda* but strengthens moral action by providing to that a rock-like spiritual foundation.

Vivekananda's Contribution to World Thought

Vivekananda advocated the monism of the Upaniṣads as systematized by Bādarāyaṇa and Śaṁkara. The ever-conscient blissful reality was to him the supreme existent and the eternal real and could be realized as a result of philosophic thinking and living. The world, according to the view of Śaṁkara, is the '*vivarta*' of Brahma, (cp. Spinoza's theory of 'modes' of one infinite, eternal, immutable, self-subsistent, substance, God). But Vivekananda did not wholly deny the reality of the cosmos, although he was bound to do so philosophically. He was inspired by his great teacher who believed in the 'Motherhood of the governing principle of Universe', a Tantric doctrine and formula, which in its incipient forms is also found in the religious systems of the ancient Indus valley and Western Asia.

Vivekananda had a peculiar theory of evolution which has been supposed to supplement the Darwinian formula. 'The Swami, though admitting Darwin's theory to be sound enough to a certain extent, assailed it with a greater theory, that of Patanjali's "filling in of nature", (जात्यन्तर परिणाम: प्रकृत्यापूरात्) which,' he showed, 'offered the ultimate solution of the causes of evolution.'[9] He pointed out that the Darwinian analysis fitted in well on the lower plane, but on the higher plane, moral factors had a great hand in giving to man his birthright of perfection and eternal salvation.

Vivekananda's epistemological analysis follows the orthodox Vedantic formula. He pointed out that all the knowledge that we receive from outside is not any external addition, but simply the occasion for the removal of obstacles so that the innate pure consciousness may shine in all its resplendence and luminosity.[10]

William James has referred to the introduction of the concept of the 'superconscious' in modern psychology by Vivekananda.[11] According to the Swami, religion arises when a person tries to advance beyond his normal cognitive faculties. Hence we find that Gautama Buddha also stated that transcendental truths had been revealed to him under the sacred Bodhi tree. Kant also says that religion is 'a postulate of reason' (reason not in the psychic individual sense but in the cosmic universal sense). St. Augustine, Dante, and Goethe declare that the religious consciousness is a fact emerging in response to the sense of the Infinite which is immanent in man. In the Christian concept of incarnation — which signified the union of spirit and matter — Hegel found the example of the absolute religion. But to Vivekananda, the *Satchidānanda Brahman* was a superior category than this Hegelian incarnation. Kant and Hegel (in their religious philosophy) stopped with a per-

[8] समं सर्वेषु भूतेषु तिष्ठन्तं परमेश्वरम्
विनश्यत्स्वविनश्यन्तं य: पश्यति स पश्यति ॥
समं पश्यन्हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम्
न हिनस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतिम् ॥
(B.G.: XIII/27-28.)

[9] For details see *Life of Vivekananda*, Vol. 2, p. 747.

[10] This theory has a resemblance to the theory of Leibniz. Bertrand Russell: *Philosophy of Leibniz*, p. 158: 'Leibniz explains that when he says truths are innate, he does not mean simply that the mind has the faculty of knowing them, but that it has the faculty of finding them in itself. Everything we know is developed out of our own nature, that is, it is obtained by reflection, by rendering conscious the perceptions which before were unconscious'.

[11] R. D. Ranade, *A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy* (Poona, 1926), p. 139.

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sonal God. Hegel criticised the undifferentiated substantial Absolute of Schelling and said, 'It was shot from a pistol'. In the *Nyāya-Muktāvali* and in the works of Rāmānuja we find a criticism of the predicateless impersonalistic Absolute. But Vivekananda believed in the Absolute on the basis of the mystic realizations of the great teachers and realized that himself. Śaṁkara also says —

"दिग्देशगुणगतिफलभेदशून्यं हि परमार्थसत् अद्वयं ब्रह्म मन्दबुद्धीनामसदिवप्रतिभाति"
(Bhāṣya on *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, 8. 1. 1).

Vivekananda said that unity was the supreme truth,[12] but to arrive at that point the stages of dualism and of modified monism had to be passed through. Sri Aurobindo also accepts this view-point: 'Their (of *dvaita*, *viśiṣṭādvaita* and *advaita*) co-existence, difficult of conception to the logical intellect can be experienced by identity in consciousness'. (*The Īśa Upaniṣad*, p. 30). But the difference between the standpoints of Aurobindo and Vivekananda is that the latter did not accept their co-existence but believed in the sublation of the dualistic and the modified monistic view-points when the monistic vision would dawn.

Vivekananda's Sociology

Vivekananda was fundamentally a man of religion and philosophy. He was not a mere sociologist and hence he could not make any great contribution to the analytical and conceptional side of social sciences.[13] He wanted, however, to work out a radical reconstruction of society.[14] Sometimes he wanted to offer a sociological interpretation of some aspects of Indian history[15] by calling attention to the protracted conflict between the Brahmanas and the Kshatriyas. Although several radical social thinkers are greatly influenced by the Marxian gospel of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the social order, based on a functional organization of the people, as crystallized in the 'four classes' of Hinduism has found able defenders in Dayananda, Vivekananda and Aurobindo, as one capable of harmonizing the spiritual, intellectual, protective, economic and social activities of men. Vivekananda did not give us a clear-cut social programme.[16] Nevertheless, he mercilessly condemned the iniquities of the caste system and untouchability. It is evident that if he would have lived long to see the great convulsion in the country, his powerful feelings for the redemption of the exploited masses would have compelled him to advance in the direction of a radical social reconstruction.[17] But it is definite that he could certainly never tolerate the social laxities prevalent

[12] Vivekananda emphatically stated that modern scientific theories were vindicating the Vedantic concept of unity. It can be pointed out, however, that while Vedantism proceeds on the basis of intuitions, science is experimental in its methodology.

[13] He denounced any personal connexion with politics and once made the remark: '"India is immortal," he said "if she persists in her search for God. But if she goes in for politics and social conflict, she will die".' (Miss MacLeod repeated these words to R. Rolland. *The Life of Vivekananda*, by R. Rolland, p. 169).

[14] He is reported to have advocated intermarriage between castes and subcastes for the promotion of social solidarity. (Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda*, p. 137).

[15] cp. Max Weber's Sociological thesis.

[16] Once Vivekananda declared that he was a 'socialist' and denounced the caste prejudices and malices of the Smriti and the Puranas.—B. N. Datta, *Swami Vivekananda — Patriot-Prophet*, pp. 369-70.

[17] Vivekananda's burning enthusiasm for the redemption of the oppressed is evident in these lines: 'I do not care whether they are Hindus, or Mohammedans or Christians, but those that love the Lord will always command my service. Plunge into the fire, my children... Everything will come to you, if you only have faith... Let each one of us pray day and night for the downtrodden millions in India, who are held fast by poverty, priestcraft and tyranny — pray day and night for them... I am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. I am poor, I love the poor... Who feels in India for the two hundred millions of men and women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way out?... Who will bring the light to them? Let these people be your God.... Him I call a Mahatman (great soul) whose heart bleeds for the poor.... So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them! ...' (*The Life of the Swami Vivekananda*, Chapter 83. Letter to his Indian disciples about 1894-1895).

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today in the name of social freedom. To that extent he would have been a conservative. He seems to have believed in the betterment and liberation of the individual first, before the society could be improved.[18] Fascist and communistic regimentation, to the contrary, kill the creative instincts of man and totalitarian armed collectivism seems to stand against natural organic evolution of the individual. The recorded history of the world shows that so long history has been the biography of a few individuals and the elite, hence I would urge that the mass society should now assert itself through the mechanism of representative democracy. This would be in consonance with the moral and spiritual idealism of Vivekananda.

Vivekananda as the Hero-Prophet

Vivekananda's heroic gospel is summarized in the following remarks of his and these show the dominant elements of his powerful personality. 'I know that truth alone gives life, and nothing but going towards reality will make us strong and none will reach truth until he is strong... Strength is the medicine for the world's disease. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have when tyrannised over by the rich... nothing gives such strength as the idea of Monism. Nothing makes us so moral as the idea of Monism.'[19] Hence we find that many great men in India have been influenced by his personality and teachings. Swami Rama Tirtha, an apostle of Neo-Vedantism who also thundered in Egypt, Japan, and America, was deeply inspired by him. Subhas Chandra Bose recognized Vivekananda as his spiritual teacher. Aurobindo was a great admirer of him and read his works in his younger days. Swami Satyadeo owed allegiance to him. Dr. Radhakrishnan testifies that the enthusiasm and eloquence of Vivekananda in defence of Hinduism have deeply touched him.[20] Mahatma Gandhi went to see him in Belur Math, but could not meet him as the Swami was then ill. (Gandhiji was then an obscure man, about the year 1901). Jawaharlal has showered praises on the Swami in his book *The Discovery of India.*

The profoundness of the personality of the Swami is unchallenged. The 'Song of the Sannyasin' is a great legacy of the saint and mystic, and Yogi. The Swami was a world Teacher, but he was also the child of India. His dedication to the cause of Āryavarta was supreme.[21] His *Lectures from Colombo to Almora* is the Gita of the present day meant to rouse millions of tāmasic Arjunas to hard work and puissant vigour.

[18] In autumn 1895 he wrote to Abhayananda: 'Individuality is my motto, I have no ambition beyond training individuals.' (Quoted in R. Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda,* p. 79n). He also once declared, 'one single man contains within himself the whole universe.' (*Ibid.*)

[19] *Complete Works of Vivekananda,* Vol. 2.

[20] See his article in the book, *Religion in Transition.*

[21] Romain Rolland, *The Life of Vivekananda* (Almora, 1953), 4th impression, p. 7, says: 'From his ashes, like those of the Phoenix of old, has sprung anew the conscience of India — the magic bird — faith in her unity and in the Great Message, brooded over from Vedic times by the dreaming spirit of his ancient race — the message for which it must render account to the rest of mankind.'

What you want is character, strengthening of the will.... He who has nothing to desire for himself, whom does he fear, and what can frighten him? What fear has death for him? What fear has evil for him?

* * * *

Strength and manliness are virtue; weakness and cowardice are sin. Independence is virtue; dependence is sin. Loving others is virtue; hating others is sin. Faith in God and in one's own self is virtue; doubt is sin.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SOCIAL REFORM

BIMLA PRASAD

[Dr. Bimla Prasad, M.A. (Patna), PH.D. (Columbia) is Professor of History, Patna University. In this beautiful and thought provoking paper he brings out Swamiji's ideas about social reform and the method, he had delineated in his teachings, to bring it about. Further, Dr. Prasad describes forcefully what was really meant by Swamiji when he talked of reform.' —*Ed.*]

Swami Vivekananda, it need hardly be said, was one of the greatest builders of Modern India and his views on various matters deserve careful study. So far as his views on social reform are concerned, they have not yet been systematically studied. It is of course generally known that he stood for the reform of the Hindu society and for the uplift of the masses, but to know this is not to know the whole story. Bhupendranath Datta does deal with this subject,[1] but his objective is not so much to present a systematic account of the views of Swami Vivekananda on the various aspects of social reform, as to prove that he was not opposed to such reform and was in fact a socialist and social revolutionary. His views on the need for the uplift of the masses are given due attention here, but those on the question of social reform come only for brief mention. Yet a perusal of the Swami's writings and speeches would show that he had given much thought to this question and had developed a distinct outlook of his own, which found repeated expression in his usual, forceful language. What follows is an attempt to present an analytical study of this outlook.

At the outset it may be pointed out that Swami Vivekananda understood fully the need for the reform of the Hindu society. He expressed his full agreement with the view of the educated classes in India that a thorough overhauling of society was necessary.[2] The basis of this overhauling was to be the freedom of the individual. Liberty, he again and again said, was the first condition of growth. Just as man must have liberty to think and speak, so he must have liberty in food, dress, and other things so long as he did not injure others. Therefore, he gave the slogan : 'No priest-craft, no social tyranny.'[3] Freedom in all matters, physical, mental and spiritual, he wrote on another occasion, was the worthiest gain and the supreme prize of man. Those social rules which stood in the way of such freedom should be considered injurious and steps taken to destroy them speedily. On the other hand encouragement should be given to those institutions which enabled men to advance on the path of freedom.[4] Thus it is clear that Swami Vivekananda stood for a society which gave freedom to all its members. But he had his own method of working for this ideal: It is here that he differed from his contemporaries in the field of social reform. 'To the reformers,' he declared, 'I will point out that I am a greater reformer than any one of them. They want to reform only little bits. I want root-and-branch reform. Where we differ is in the method.'[5]

These differences in the method were several. In the first place, Swami Vivekananda thought that the method of the other reformers was one of destruction while his own was that of construction. Explaining this difference he affirmed, 'I do not believe in reform ; I believe in growth.'[6] At another place he said that

[1] Bhupendranath Datta, *Swami Vivekananda, Patriot-Prophet* (Calcutta : Nababharat Publishers, 1954).

[2] 'A Plan of Work for India', 1895, *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1957 ; 8 Volumes), IV, p. 371.

[3] 'To My Brave Boys', 1894, *Ibid.*, p. 367.

[4] 'Letter to a Bengali Lady', 1898, *Works*, V, p. 110.

[5] 'My Plan of Campaign', 1897, *Works*, III, p. 213.

[6] *Ibid.*

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it was very easy to break down; a maniac could break anything he liked, but it would be hard for him to build up anything. Fanatics who stood for destruction might do some good, according to their light, but much more harm. For social institutions are not made in a day and to change them means removing the cause. If there is an evil, denouncing it will not remove it. But if one works at the root, first finds out the cause of that evil and then removes it, the effect will also be removed.[7] Therefore, instead of denouncing the evils in the Hindu society he took the position that this society was not bad, but good, only he wanted it to be better still.[8]

Swami Vivekananda advanced several arguments in favour of his plea to do away with denunciation as a method for bringing about social reform. People, he pointed out, had had enough lectures and papers on the evils in their society; what they were looking for then was a man who had real love and sympathy for them and would drag them out of the difficulty. Besides, denunciation had served no purpose except to fill the land with 'a most vituperative, a most condemnatory literature.' The reformers had condemned the orthodox and the orthodox had retaliated in the same language. The result had been the creation of a literature in every vernacular of India which was 'the shame of the race, the shame of the country.' Swami Vivekananda asked: 'Is this reform? Is this leading the nation to glory? Whose fault is this?'[9] He of course implied that the fault was with the reformers.

His chief argument against denunciation, however, was nationalistic. He was too much of a patriot to think of denouncing his country or his society even for reforming it. Reforms had to be championed, but in such a way as not to lessen the pride of the people in their country. 'If there are holes in this national ship, this society of ours,' he declared, 'we are its children. Let us go and stop the holes. Let us gladly do it with our heart's blood; and if we cannot, then let us die. We will make a plug of our brains and put them into the ship, but condemn it, never. Say not one harsh word against this society.'[10]

Swami Vivekananda's opposition to the propaganda carried on by Christian missionaries and other foreigners was equally strong and based on similar grounds. He of course admitted that the Hindu society was not perfect and that various defects had crept into it, but this in his opinion, did not entitle foreigners to run it down, for there were defects in other countries also, in some cases of a more serious nature. 'If, foreign friends,' he declared, 'you come up with genuine sympathy to help and not to destroy, Godspeed to you. But if by abuses, incessantly hurled against the head of a prostrate race in season and out of season, you mean only the triumphant assertion of the moral superiority of your own nation, let me tell you plainly, if such a comparison be instituted with any amount of justice, the Hindu will be found head and shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race.'[11]

Just as social reform had to be championed without affecting the people's pride in their country and society, so, according to Swami Vivekananda, care had also to be taken not to tamper with their religion. For religion was 'the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life' in India and if India threw it off, it would die as a nation. Everything in India had to be worked through the vitality of religion and social reform had to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system would bring.[12] The failure to perceive this had been the chief cause of the failure of the efforts of the Hindu social reformers of the nineteenth century. Swami Vivekananda thought that in their haste they had laid all the evils in the Hindu society at the door of religion. Like the man in the

[7] 'Maya and the Evolution of the Conception of God', 1896, *Works*, II, p. 116.

[8] 'A Plan of Work for India' *Works*, IV, p. 371.

[9] 'My Plan of Campaign', 1897, *Works*, III, p. 215.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[11] 'Reply to the Madras Address', 1894, *Works*, IV, p. 345.

[12] 'My Plan of Campaign', 1897, *Works*, III, p. 220.

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story, wanting to kill the mosquito that sat on a friend's forehead, they had been trying to deal such heavy blows as would have killed man and mosquito together; but fortunately they had not succeeded and had only dashed themselves against immovable rocks. Their efforts, however, had not been in vain, for they had administered the necessary shock to the society to rouse it from slumber. People should thank these noble and unselfish souls and learn the proper lesson from their experience.[13] The question of destruction of religion should not arise, for such destruction was not necessary in order to reform the Hindu society. The evils in society had cropped up not on account of religion, but because religion had not been applied to society as it should have been.[14]

If social reform was not to be at the cost of religion, religion also was not to be used to impede social reform. Swami Vivekananda's view was that the Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow.[15] The work, as he saw it, was to make 'a European society with India's religion.'[16] Explaining this idea he wrote, 'Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we will do it.'[17] The start had to be made on religious grounds and no radical social reforms had to be preached in the beginning. The society was to be revived on the old grounds of universal salvation and equality.[18]

Swami Vivekananda agreed with those who contended that religion had nothing to do with social reform, but insisted that religion had also no business to formulate social laws and insist on the difference between one person and another. According to him, it had been a terrible mistake for religion to interfere in social matters. But having done so it was now hypocritical to say that social reform was not the business of religion. The rule that religion has to do only with the soul and has no business to interfere in social matters must be applied also to the mischief which had already been done. Otherwise the situation would be similar to the case of a man who after forcibly taking possession of another's property cries through the nose when that man tries to regain it and preaches the doctrine of the sanctity of human right. What business, asked Swami Vivekananda, had the priests to interfere (to the misery of millions of human beings) in every social matter?[19] The implication was that in order to undo the mischief done in the past, religion must take a hand in social reform in modern times.

The need of the hour, however, as Swami Vivekananda saw it, was not to insist on particular items of reform, but to awaken the people and leave them free to decide what reforms they wanted. His whole ambition in life, he explained, was to set in motion a machinery which would bring noble ideas to the door of all men and women and then let them settle their own fate. In particular they were to be made aware of what their forefathers as well as other nations had thought on the most momentous questions of the day and what others were doing then. 'We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallization will be done by nature according to her laws.'[20] In his opinion it was wrong, a thousand times wrong, for any one to feel or say that he would work out the salvation of others. 'I am asked again and again,' he declared, 'what I think of the widow problem and what I think of the woman question. Let me answer once for all — am I a widow that you ask me that nonsense? Am I a woman that you ask me that question again and again? Who are you to solve women's problems? Are you the Lord God that you should rule over every

[13] 'Reply to the Madras Address', 1894, *Works*, IV. p. 347.
[14] 'Epistles', 1894, *Works*, V, p. 37.
[15] 'Epistles', 1893, *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[16] 'To My Brave Boys', 1894, *Works*, IV, p. 387.
[17] 'Epistles', 1894, *Works*, V, p. 26.
[18] 'To My Brave Boys', *op. cit.*
[19] 'What We Believe In', 1894, *Works*, IV, pp. 358-9.
[20] 'Epistles', 1894, *Works*, V, p. 25.

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widow and every woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems.'[21]

According to Swami Vivekananda, to talk of social reform before the awakening of the people was to put the cart before the horse. For who would bring about reform? The Government could not make a move in the absence of a healthy, strong public opinion in favour of reform. But it would take time for such an opinion to develop and until this happened the country would have to wait. 'The tyranny of a minority,' Swami Vivekananda declared, 'is the worst tyranny that the world ever sees. A few men who think that certain things are evil will not make a nation move. Why does not the nation move? First educate the nation, create your legislative body, and then the law will be forthcoming. First create the power, the sanction from which the law will spring.'[22] Therefore, instead of frittering away their energies on ideal reforms which would never become practical, Indians should go to the root of the evil and educate the people so that they might be able to solve their own problems. The new order of things was the salvation of the people by the people, and it would take time to make it workable, especially in India, which had always in the past been governed by kings.[23]

By the word 'people' here Swami Vivekananda really meant the people, the overwhelming majority of whom were poor and illiterate and not just the men of the middle classes. 'The one thing that is at the root of all evil in India,' he emphasized, 'is the condition of the poor.'[24] On another occasion he exhorted his friends to remember that the nation lived in the cottage and prescribed as their motto 'Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death.'[25] He looked at the problem of social reform from the point of view of the masses and did not show much interest in those reforms which did not touch them. This was one of the chief reasons for his lack of interest in the contemporary movement for social reform. He found that all that the champions of the latter meant by social reform was either widow remarriage or female emancipation, or something of that sort. These would touch only the people of the higher castes and not the masses who already had them. This, in his opinion, was not reform, but a form of selfishness on the part of the educated people who wanted somehow to cleanse their own house and keep it tidy and let others go from bad to worse.[26]

Swami Vivekananda admitted that such reforms might do good to a few, but contended that they would not be of much avail to the whole nation.[27] Referring to the movement for widow remarriage he once remarked, 'Of course, I am a sympathizer in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon the condition of the masses.'[28] Such reforms he described as ornamental and asked people to work for real reformation, which was the uplift of the masses through education. This would be a slow process, but a sure one. 'You must go down to the basis of the thing,' he said 'to the very root of the matter. That is what I call radical reform. Put the fire there and let it burn upwards and make an Indian nation. And the solution of the problem is not so easy, as it is a big and a vast one. Be not in a hurry, this problem has been known several hundred years.'[29]

To sum up, it is clear from the above that Swami Vivekananda had a distinct philosophy of his own on social reform. He agreed with the view of the educated Indians of his day that there was need for a thorough overhauling of the Hindu Society, but differed from them with regard to the method for bringing this

[21] 'Vedanta and Its Application to Indian Life', *Works*, III, p. 246.
[22] 'My Plan of Campaign', 1897, *op. cit.*, pp. 215-6.
[23] 'Interview to the Hindu', 1897, *Works*, V, p. 145.
[24] 'Our Duty to the Masses', 1894, *Works*, IV, p. 362.
[25] 'Epistles', 1894, *Works*, V, pp. 25-6.
[26] 'Conversations and Dialogues', 1898, *Works*, V, p. 249.
[27] *Ibid.*
[28] 'Epistles', 1894, *Works*, V, pp. 25-6.
[29] 'My Plan of Campaign', 1897, *op cit.*

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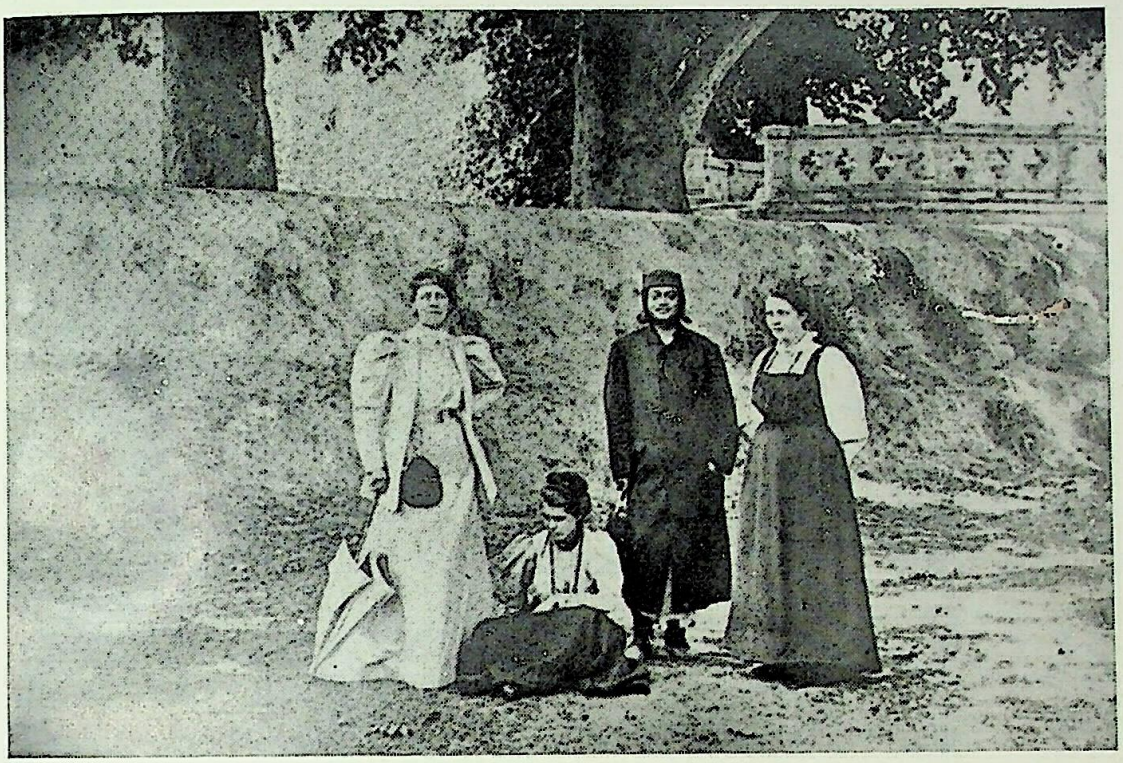
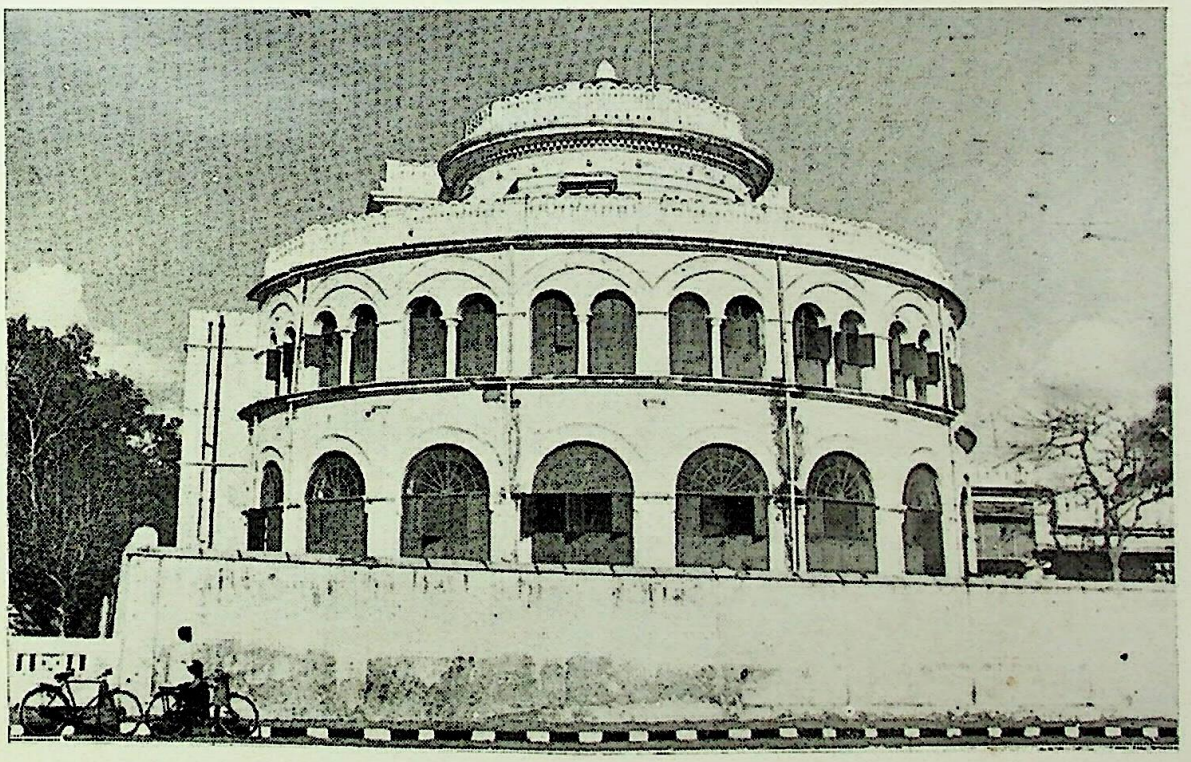


(KASHMIR 1898)
Standing : (L to R) (1) Miss J. MacLeod, (2) Swami Vivekananda, (3) Sister Nivedita.
Sitting: Mrs. Ole Bull.



The House in Madras where Swami Vivekananda stayed for a few days, after his return from the West, in 1897. Formerly known as Ice House it has been now re-named Vivekananda House.

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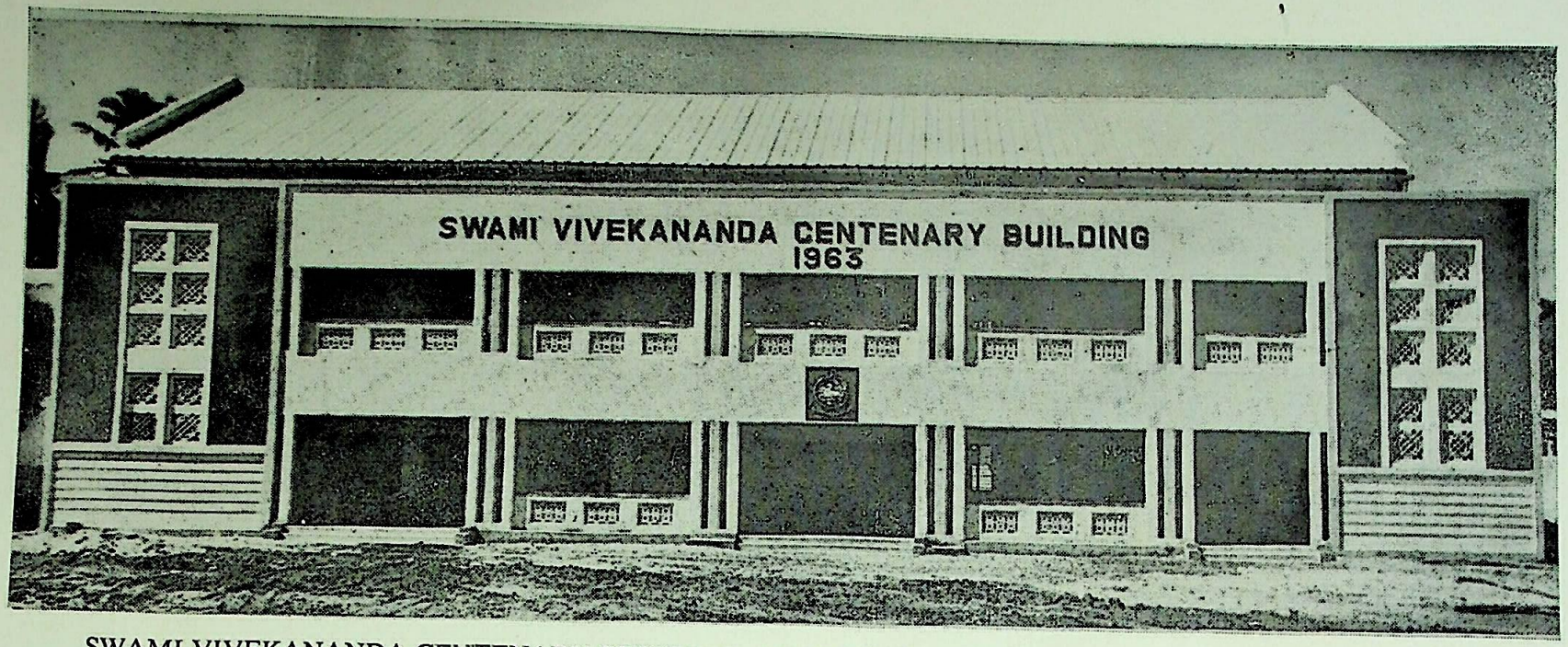

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA CENTENARY BUILDING, AT SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MYLAPORE, MADRAS.

(This newly constructed building will house the Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Library, a children's corner and a reading room on the ground floor and on the first floor it provides commodius space for a lecture hall.)

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about. According to him the emphasis should be not on destruction but on construction, not even on reform as such but on growth. Denunciation of the society had to be avoided as it would result in mutual recrimination and would affect the pride of the people in their country. No attack should also be made on religion in the name of social reform. For religion was the soul of India's national life and if this was destroyed, India would die as a nation. On the other hand, religion should not be used to hamper the cause of social reform but should make its own contribution to it. This contribution, however, should be confined to bringing about awakening among the people so that they might decide for themselves what reforms they wanted and should not include insistence on particular reforms. Such reforms would have to wait till the people became awakened, otherwise the result would be the tyranny of the minority which was the worst tyranny of all. Here the word people meant the masses and not just the educated classes. Social reforms advocated by the latter did not touch the masses and hence would not be of much value from the point of view of the nation as a whole. Real reform would come from working at the root, among the masses, and making them enlightened and in a position to raise themselves through their own efforts. This would take time, but there is no other way.

THE LOVING HEART OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

SISTER CHRISTINE

His compassion for the poor and downtrodden, the defeated, was a passion. One did not need be told, but seeing him one knew that he would willingly have offered his flesh for food and his blood for drink to the hungry. To this day his birthday is celebrated by feeding the poor. The downtrodden, the outcasts are on this day served by Brahmins and Kayasthas, young men of the highest castes. To those in the West it is impossible to convey the significance of such service. Caste and outcaste! Who but a Vivekananda could bring about this relationship so unobtrusively? No arguments regarding caste and the depressed classes. Nothing but heart and devotion. So even in small things while he was still in America. Thus, when asked why he was taking French lessons, he said in confusion, 'This is the only way M.L. can keep from starving.' Thrusting a ten dollar bill into the hand of another he said, 'Give this to S...., do not say it is from me.' When one of the group, a weak brother, was accused of juggling with the Vedanta Society's money, he said, 'I will make good any deficiency.' Then the matter was dropped and he said to one of the others, 'I do not know where I could have found the money to make up the loss, but I could not let the poor suffer.'

Even after he left America, he still had great concern for those he left behind, who found life a great struggle. Especially did he feel for 'women with men's responsibilities'. Asked whether he endorsed a certain woman who was going about the country as a religious teacher and using his name and reputation to get a following, he said 'Poor thing! She has a husband to support, and she must get a certain amount every month.' 'But Swami,' someone said, 'she claims to be authorised by you to prepare students for your teaching. Should she be allowed to mislead people, take their money, and use your name?' All that he said was, 'Poor thing! Poor thing! Shiva! Shiva!' With this 'Shiva! Shiva!' he put the matter out of his mind. We knew that he had reminded himself of his true nature, in which everything of a disquieting nature was dissolved.

(From *The Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*)

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA THE PROPHET OF STRENGTH AND FEARLESSNESS

P. NAGARAJA RAO

[Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., is Reader in Philosophy, Sri Venkateswara University College, Tirupati. Readers of *Vedanta Kesari* are familiar with his writings as he has been a regular contributor, for some years. Swamiji's message of strength which he succinctly presents, forms the subject of his article. — *Ed.*]

Swami Vivekananda represents the best of India's philosophical wisdom and the knowledge of the modern West. He combines in himself half a dozen roles, all of them grounded in his deep spirituality. He was a great interpreter of the East to the West, a builder of the bridge between the two worlds, a patriot, an educationist and a social reformer. What impressed the West most is his dynamic personality. One is struck by the largeness of his features, broad strong nose, full expressive lips, dark luminous eyes, handsome bronze face, the watchful gleam of his eyes, the splendid robe that best suited him, his musical voice and above all his easy, quiet but assured air of command. He was a unique personality from the East.

Early in his life he was a student of Western thought, and was deeply read in Western metaphysics. Along with his desire for knowledge, there was a deep unrest in him yearning for spiritual experience. He was a member of the Brahmo Samaj which attempted to modernise Hinduism, but did not satisfy Vivekananda. It is the firsthand experience of spiritual life and the direct transmission of the experience by his Master, Ramakrishna, that made Vivekananda the cyclonic Hindu, the devoted apostle and the radiant monk of practical Vedanta. What St. Paul did for Christ, Swamiji did for his Master. His triumphant visit to Chicago, to attend and address the Parliament of Religions, is a historic day in the history of Hinduism. The bell-like music of his voice and the mysterious vibrations made an indelible impression on the Americans. He received thunderous applause from all. When he uttered the words 'Brothers and Sisters', it was no mere oratorical phrase, or a diplomatic policy utterance. It was a deeply felt and sincerely believed simple truth born out of the fullness of his realization. It is this divine fact that was responsible for the impression it made on the minds of men.

In his life of 39 years, the first eighteen he spent in his study. He met his Master when he was 18 and after his spiritual experience, he wandered for over seven years all over India, including the Himalayas and obtained first hand experience of the dire needs of India and the sorry plight of her masses. He hated superstition, backwardness, and all the social ills of our land and determined to fight them all. He loved India and believed that she had a message to the world. He was no narrow nationalist, nor was he a vague internationalist. He believed that India should give the world, the non-dogmatic, rational, scientific and humanistic religion of Vedanta and in return learn the ways of industrial efficiency, technological progress, and scientific advancement. He stood for an exchange of values. He made this determination on the rock (named after him now) at *Kanyakumari* in 1893. He stayed, in all four years, in America and three months in England. He started as many as five centres of Vedanta in America.

His writings have been a source of infinite inspiration to all subsequent renascent Hindu thinkers, like Gandhiji, Aurobindo, etc. 'There has been no single self-sacrificing Indian worker who has not been influenced more or less by his thoughts, words and example.' Swami Vivekananda's philosophy

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is the living religion of the Hindus, Vedanta. He declared to the world that the Ultimate Reality is One Existence, which is *Existence-Consciousness* and *Bliss* (Sat, Chit and Ananda). Spirit is Ultimate Reality. The world of souls and matter are the manifestation of the spirit; from the movement of atoms to the happenings in history, all is governed by the spirit. The human being is essentially divine and is the 'unprisoned splendour' encased in a body. The human being is not a creature tied down to a body of lust without any glimmer of divinity. It is the feeling that we are all separate, the ignorance of the fundamental oneness of Reality, and the illusion of difference, that is responsible for all our conflict, tragedy, competition and selfish individualism. To get rid of it we need to realize the divine nature in us. It is not a travel to another sphere. It is a transforming experience that brings about the realization of our oneness with all (*Sarvātmabhāva*). Such a religion is the need of the age. 'Religion is realization; temples, Churches, books and forms are simply the kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough to take higher steps.'

Further, he declared that all religions of the world are agreed on fundamentals. They all look upon men as brothers. What has brought religion into disrepute is its bad practical record, e.g. wars, inquisition, forced conversion and the proclamation that each religion is the exclusive and complete disclosure of truth. It is this denominational, dogmatic and sectarian claim that has made one religion fight with another. Swamiji declared in his Chicago speech, 'Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendent, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilizations and sent whole nations to despair.' Throughout his teaching one finds Swamiji's clarion call is for a humanistic, man-making religion. He believed that man can best grow and integrate his personality by a right type of spiritual religion. Religion of the right-type is the best remedy for national integration and international peace. Religion should satisfy the mind and the heart of man, and his emotions. Religion is strength according to Swamiji. 'Strength is goodness, and weakness is sin. Infinite strength is religion.'

Religion must express itself in the service of humanity and imbibe the spirit of renunciation. Swamiji did not want religion to be taught to empty stomachs. The man of true religion must serve men who are the manifestations of God on earth. He must help them in all the walks of life. Service is worship. It is not a complacent act of condescension towards others. Service is an opportunity to worship the Lord in the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted. 'Let these be your Gods, know that service to these alone is the highest religion,' thundered Swamiji.

Swamiji reinterpreted the concept of *renunciation* (sannyasa). It is not giving up of all activities, and going to mountain tops and monasteries in search of individual salvation. It is not running away from social agonies into ivory towers. It is not freedom from action. It is freedom in action. It is not do-nothingism. It is a life of active service in the name of the Lord, giving up all selfish motives. It is nishkāma-karma. 'To be in the world and not be of it is the true test of renunciation.' True renunciation, Śankara equated with perfection. Renunciation makes service perfect. 'The givers are worshippers and the receivers are the divinity itself. Service is not to be tainted with either selfishness or feeling of compassion.'

Along with renunciation and service Swamiji stressed *tolerance*. Toleration is not a stroke of policy with the Hindus, but it is an article of their faith. Toleration is not negative. It is an active appreciation of the good in the others and the incorporation of the same with us. Swamiji declared, 'We Hindus do not merely tolerate, we unite ourselves with every religion, praying in the Mosque of the Mohammedans, worshipping before the fire of the Zoroastrian and kneeling before the cross of the Christian.' Swamiji believed in the *Fellow-*

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ship of all Faiths. He declared 'I accept all religions that were in the past and worship them; I worship God with every one of them. . . . Is God's book finished, or is it still a continuous revelation going on? It is a marvellous book — these spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran and all other sacred books are but so many pages and yet, an infinite number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. We stand in the present, but open ourselves to the infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the light of the present and open every window of the heart for all that will come in the future. Salutations to all the prophets of the past, to all the great ones of the present and to those that are to come in the future.'

Romain Rolland, the biographer, observes that the above passage is an eloquent commentary on the catholicity of the Swamiji's global outlook. Each religion emphasizes one or the other of the important aspects of human life. They do not contradict each other. They supplement and, are there to suit the different tastes and temperaments of men.

Swamiji loved India and looked upon India as the spiritual home of the nations of the world. Spirituality is India's message. She should reform and reconstruct her society and get rid of evils like untouchability, caste-system based on birth, weakness, superstition etc. but not by giving up her religion or her culture. She must keep the fire on the altar and remove the smoke. She must not make her past a fetter, but use it as an inspiring ideal.

Vivekananda stood for healthy social-reform based on the religion and the culture of India. He fought stoutly for the uplift of women and the masses. He declared 'the neglect of the masses spells our ruin'. Swamiji gave a practical shape to the spiritual ideals of Hinduism. He made Vedanta practical. Swamiji loved India and he brought home to the minds of us all, the glories of our heritage, her past follies, precarious present and her great future. He knew the importance of the economic well-being. He wanted India to learn from America four things: (a) great concern for the masses, (b) high status for education and freedom for women, (c) the power of scientific and technological organization, (d) their astounding capacity for work and the acquisition of material prosperity. Speaking about America in an important letter he writes, 'The Americans have their faults too; which nation has not? But this is my summing up. Asia laid the germs of civilization, Europe developed men, America is developing women and the masses. It is the paradise of women and the labourer.' Swamiji loved India and stood for an integral education to pull her up. He talked of a man-making education. He wanted India to draw the best from the rest of the world and still remain in the core essentially Indian.

Swamiji's clarion call is as fresh as it was when he gave it. It has a marked topicality today. 'Thou brave one, behold, take courage, feel proud that thou art an Indian and proudly proclaim, I am an Indian, every Indian is my brother. The Indian is my life, India's Gods and Goddesses are my God. India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age. The soil of India is my highest heaven and the good of India is my good.'

Undisturbed and every steady direction of the mind and the heart to the Lord with an inseparable attachment is indeed the highest manifestation of man's love to God.

* * *

Love knows no bargaining. Wherever there is any seeking for something in return; there can be no real love; it becomes a mere matter of shop-keeping.

— SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND VEDANTA IN ITS MODERN APPLICATION

S. S. RAGHAVACHAR

[Prof. S. S. Raghavachar, M.A., Reader in Philosophy, University of Mysore, is also a scholar in Sanskrit and has translated some Dvaita and Vishishtadvaita texts into English. In this learned paper, he traces the development of Vedantic thought and the role Swami Vivekananda has played in its propagation in recent history, with particular reference to its application to every day life. — *Ed.*]

I

It is a privilege to be associated in some way with the celebration of the Birth Centenary of Swami Vivekananda. He is a star of the first magnitude in the cultural renaissance of Modern India and his powerful genius at once summed up the hoary wisdom of the ages and laid down lines for future progress and reconstruction. In addition to this profound significance of his personality to India, from the perspective of world-thought, his message represents a great force making for man's spiritual liberation. It is rewarding to dwell on this universal aspect of Vivekananda's life and principles.

II

For the student of Philosophy the first noteworthy fact is that the Swami was not merely a philosopher, a daring metaphysician of Vedantic Idealism, employing methods of logical analysis and speculative construction but also a monk, who renounced the life of worldliness and dedicated himself in ascetic completeness to the ideal of Vedanta. In him are combined philosophic thought and religious self-surrender. This is in the high tradition of Vedanta and the Swami constitutes a symbol of the philosophical heritage of Vedanta.

Whether this synthesis of philosophy and religion is a desirable feature is frequently debated and it strikes as an arresting phenomenon from the standpoint of European philosophy. European philosophy has descended from Greek thought, not particularly religious in its best periods, and European religion is Hebraic in origin and was not either philosophical or intellectual in its original formation. Since the culture of Europe had to struggle with these two divergent forces throughout its long history, it embodies a basically unresolved dualism. Hence a student of philosophy taking the pattern of Western culture as his standard is apt to be baffled by the synthesis of the two elements in Indian Culture. But the situation in Indian culture is radically different. Indian philosophy has always had a religious orientation in a general sense and Indian religion always functioned with a philosophical core in all its diverse formulations. Hence the synthesis appears profoundly natural and Swami Vivekananda appears as a historic representation of this unbroken tendency. He was a Vedantin *par excellence,* Vedanta being understood as a system of metaphysics and a life of complete dedication.

III

Vedanta, in the long history of its development, has passed through three determining periods. The first period was the period of the Upaniṣads when the sages like Yājñyavalkya and Uddālaka, brooding over the fundamental problems of reality and life, ascended to the brilliant insights recorded in the texts concerning the Ātman and Brahman and the final destiny of man. They shaped their utterances in the context of Vedic thought and brought to fulfilment the voyage of discovery

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registered in the Samhitas, Brāhmaṇas and Āraṇyakas. Their final outlook was the distilled essence of the entire Vedic endeavour towards the definition of the Real and the good.

The second great age of the Vedanta is dominated by Bādarāyaṇa and his commentators. The horizon of thought has widened by now and a variety of schools of philosophy have developed with varying degrees of hostility to the orthodox philosophy of the Upaniṣads. In this period Vedanta found a dominently intellectual reformulation entailing a critical valuation of the other schools of thought. Now the context of thought within which Vedanta was sought to be substantiated was the entire range of the philosophic systems of India, beginning with the Materialism of Chārvaka and ending with the ritualistic orthodoxy of Pūrva-mīmāmsa. Almost all the logically conceivable alternatives in philosophic construction are represented in these systems and an assertion of Vedanta in this climate of thought was the heroic achievement of the great Ācharyas of medieval India.

Swami Vivekananda is the central figure in the third crucial period of Vedanta. By now the placid Indian culture with its traditions and schools of thought is subjected to alien influences. The political and cultural influence of Islam produced manifold consequences. More recent and more vital was the impact of the West, with its religion, its philosophical movements, its social aspirations and experiments and its scientific and technological revolutions. The world of thought was immeasurably extended and it was a challenge to Vedanta to formulate itself in terms that could render it valid, in the vastly extended field of comparative thought. India's response to this new challenge is magnificently voiced forth in the message of Swami Vivekananda. He reaffirms the old insights, but in the context of the new field of all the currents of science, religion, philosophy and culture what was merely a school of Indian philosophy, however dominant, is, for the first time, set forth as a philosophy for the world with a full consideration of the bearings of all the major currents of world-thought. In short, the Swami placed Vedanta on the cultural map of the world, as a spiritual outlook, whose validity is enhanced rather than curtailed, by the vast extension of modern perspective.

IV

The central principle of Vedanta, according to Swami Vivekananda, is the Ātman. The Ātman is to be investigated both by an analysis of the individual subject and by that of the cosmic object. He contends that an analysis of the Individual, starting with the gross physical organism and passing through the sensory mechanism and the mind, ultimately arrives at the Self, which is self-revealing and unchanging. Such a transcendent spiritual principle is disclosed as presupposed by even the simplest act of perception. No other description of the subject would fit into even the ordinary acts of cognition. Similarly the philosophy of external nature must seek, and has been seeking, a unitary ground of the cosmic manifold. That ground cannot be materialistically conceived. In the first place the reality of pure matter is not proved. Even if it were proved, the problem of the emergence of consciousness out of a purely material base remains unsolved and insoluble. There is a necessity to re-interpret nature or matter in such a way that consciousness could arise out of it in the course of evolution. The only solution would lie in conceiving of nature as involved spirit or as consciousness struggling to manifest itself through a conquest of its own condition of degradation. Nature must be spiritualistically interpreted and be looked upon as the expression of a cosmic or absolute spirit. The next step is to see that there can be no two absolutes, a spirit in man and a spirit in nature and that the work of reason is incomplete until a final synthesis of ultimate principles is discovered. This bold final step Vedanta takes in its identification of the Ātman and Brahman, in the dictum of 'Tattwamasi', the ultimate essence of man being affirmed as one in substance with the ultimate

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ground of the universe. This spiritual non-dualism is the eternal message of Vedanta, in Swami Vivekananda's interpretation. From this root-principle the Swami deduces a series of vital consequences bearing on the whole of life and thought.

V

In the first place it means that man's spiritual goal lies in the realization of this inherent divinity. Religion is no mere dogma or theory or ritual. It is a vital self-transformation or 'self-de-hypnotization' bringing out the infinite glory of the Brahman in the Ātman. Such a realization must signify a tremendous generation of power, for, truly the Ātman is infinite and all in all. Hence the characteristic teaching of the Swamiji that Spirituality is Strength and that Strength is the test of true realization. It also implies that genuine strength is spiritual and divine and is not to be confounded with brute physical might. This realization must be total and must be worked out through the utilization of all the resources of personality. Thus the Swamiji's gospel of the four yogas emerges doing justice to the emotional, ethical, mystical and intellectual trends of the various paths of spirituality. Marked is his emphasis on the ethical gospel of work. The Ātman is one and universal. To realize it as such means the realization of the unity of life in action, through selfless dedication to the cause of universal freedom and well-being. It also follows that from the plane of such realization, the divergent religions and cults lose their separatist claims to absolute truth and will be viewed as so many approaches to a unitary and all-inclusive goal. Traditions may be many but the spirit in man is one and absolute. Swami Vivekananda looked upon Vedanta as specially charged with the mission of elucidating the common basis of all religions and bringing about their final harmonization. What characterizes all these principles of his teaching is a dynamic wholeness of vision. There is tremendous power combined with comprehensiveness of outlook. This is a rare combination. Narrowness may breed fanatic zeal. Failure of energy may bring about a complacent tolerance and universality. But here we have immense energy harnessed to the most universal point of view. Vedanta in his hands becomes a gospel of intense activity and the widest expansion of spirit. Vedanta has a great future — as it would fulfil a fundamental need of humanity, only if it adheres to the firm lines that Swami Vivekananda laid down for its reconstruction. Philosophical Idealism and the general point of view of the religions are steadily losing ground in modern thought. It is clear that mere Mysticism or Western Idealism represented by Platonism or the German schools of the last century are powerless by themselves to establish the spiritual point of view. As Deussen saw clearly, the spiritual and philosophical resources of the Vedantic tradition are to be appropriated and utilized to the full for the establishment of such a point of view. If Vedanta is to be effective in this task of strengthening the structure of a spiritual standpoint in philosophy, it should be approached in the manner exemplified by Swami Vivekananda. It is no longer a question of preserving Vedanta; Vedanta becomes the central pillar supporting the edifice of man's Idealistic and spiritual aspirations.

VI

We are confronted in the modern world by humanitarian programmes lacking a spiritual foundation and the history of the religions has familiarized us with the phenomena of religions not issuing in vital moral regeneration and progress in the humanization of man. Both these are aberrations; if we would listen to Swami Vivekananda. Ethics, he saw clearly, is without a basis if it is not founded on the concept of a universal Ātman. Religion as the realization of Divinity is unreal if it does not signify a ceaseless striving for universal emancipation. Ethics needs to be spiritualized and Religion must be humanized. This two-fold reformation of outlook is urged with matchless force by his dynamic Vedanta.

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VII

Nothing great has ever been achieved without faith in the greatness of human nature. No significant contribution to human uplift can ever be rendered if our conception of man is that he is a wretched and helpless creature. The masses can never be emancipated if our idea is that the worth of man is ultimately nothing. The most basic need, therefore, is to see something of lasting and weighty significance in man as man. This need, the Swamiji urges, is amply met only by the Vedantic declaration of the Divinity of man. In each man is enshrined the immortal divine essence waiting to be unveiled and manifested in all its splendour. Only this conviction can supply inspiration for lofty endeavour and heroic self-sacrifice for humanity. Hence the recurring assertion of the divinity of man.

Thus in all essentials Swami Vivekananda has re-invested the old Vedantic thought with new life and vitality and brought to the bewildered consciousness of modern man, guidance and illumination.

SAMADARSHITVAM OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

SWAMI VIMALANANDA

[Swami Vimalananda was one of Swamiji's disciples and had joined the Math after Swamiji's return from the West. — *Ed.*]

There was one more prominent feature of Swamiji's life which speaks to me volumes about his renunciation. I mean his dealing with rich men. Many of you are aware that among his foreign disciples some are very wealthy and a few of them came out to India to help Swamiji in his work. The treatment which he used to give them did not in the least differ from that given to his most insignificant Indian disciples. He was kind and loving by nature to all, but his love did not make him blind to their flaws and defects which needed mending.

Gentle speech would not always serve the purpose, and Swamiji would have to be at times hard. And in this apparently unpleasant treatment, his wealthy disciples would have exactly the same fate as his begging Sannyasins. At times, this would be too much for persons born and brought up in the lap of luxury and accustomed to hear words of praise and flattery. From a worldly point of view, Swamiji paid dear for it. But did he ever regret? Far from it. The perfect unconcern which he showed whether the rich people would stick to him or give him up is truly unprecedented.

Coming to the subtlest of all the ties that bind a man of some worth to the world, I mean, desire for fame, we see in Swamiji the same typical man of renunciation. While he was wandering as a common mendicant in various parts of India, he was studiously avoiding the praise of men by constantly shifting from place to place and changing his name. It was not possible for him to keep his extraordinary charming personality concealed from the knowledge of those who would come in touch with him. Many of them would like to be with him, but Swamiji would disappoint them by giving them the slip while they would be away from him and making it impossible to be found out by going to a new place and taking a new name. I may remark, in passing, that this period of his life which is the least known to the world, and, I believe, of the greatest interest for the study of the evolution of the inner man, was always characterized by a passion for keeping aloof from the company of others.

(From *the Vedanta Kesari*, Jan., Feb. 1923.)

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA — THE SPIRITUAL AMBASSADOR OF INDIA

U. THANT

[The following forms a substantial part of the speech delivered by His Excellency, U. Thant, the Secretary General of the United Nations, who was the chief speaker at a dinner held by the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York, at the Warwick Hotel, on March 28, 1963, to celebrate the birth centenary of Swami Vivekananda. — *Ed.*]

Swami Vivekananda, as most of you are aware, was the greatest spiritual ambassador of India, if I may say so, in the history of India. And for that matter, the history of Asia. The main purpose of his historic visit to the United States of America, over sixty years ago, was to find a synthesis, if I can interpret and assess his activities in this country. He was very keen to bring about this synthesis between India and the United States, and for that matter, between Asia and the West. To understand Swami Vivekananda it is very important to understand the cultural and spiritual background of India, the cultural and spiritual background of Asia.

In Asia, as most of you know, we attach more importance to the mind than to the body, and still much more importance to the spirit than to the mind. Traditionally, the aim of education in Asia has been — I stress the word traditionally—to discover what is happening inside of us, to discover what is the truth, to discover the truth inside of us, to learn to understand the extraordinary moral and spiritual qualities of man. In other words, the traditional aim of education and culture and civilization in Asia has been, throughout the centuries, the discovery of oneself, and to try to understand the spiritual qualities such as humility, reverence for old people, and so on.

In the West, the stress has been on the development of the intellect, if my interpretation of Western educational aims and ideals is correct. There is too much stress on the intellectual development of man. The aim of education in the West — when I say West, of course, it applies to the United States of America, Western Europe, and other countries of Europe too — has been, and still is, to create doctors, scientists, engineers, to discover outer space, to go to the moon and to Mars and the stars, while at the same time, the development of the moral and spiritual qualities of man is more or less ignored.

I feel rather strongly that the exclusive intellectual development without a corresponding moral and spiritual development is sure to lead us from one crisis to another. At the same time, in the middle of the twentieth century, in this space age, a purely moral and spiritual development unaccompanied by corresponding intellectual development is also an anachronism. So what is necessary in this second half of the twentieth century is a certain kind of synthesis, a certain kind of harmony, a certain harmonizing activity, by which man must be fully integrated. The development of man must be intellectual, moral and spiritual. Only then man will be able to achieve the objectives set out in his own particular religion.

I think if we attempt to analyse the main purpose of Swami Vivekananda's mission to this country — my interpretation is he wanted to find a harmony, a kind of a synthesis between the Eastern concept of culture and civilization and the Western concept of culture and civilization. It is very true of these tense times, much more than sixty years ago. What we need today is not to neglect or ignore the moral and spiritual qualities of mankind left by centuries of tradition and which are the keys of all religion.

Another aspect of Swami Vivekananda's mission, to my knowledge, is the need of

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tolerance. Need of tolerance in human relations. Not only religious tolerance but also tolerance in all spheres of activity. I think this message is also very necessary in these tense times; much more, if I may say so, much more than sixty years ago. If we recount a few phases of historical developments — let us say, for instance, a few centuries ago, there was no such thing as religious tolerance. Religious tolerance was unthinkable. Let us take, for instance, the Crusades. During the time of the Crusades the Christians believed, and they believed very strongly, that all non-Christians were heretics. The same applied to Muslims, perhaps to Hindus, perhaps to Buddhists, perhaps to Jews, but according to European history during the time of the Crusades the Muslims also believed very strongly that Christians were heretics. So both the Christians and the Muslims (they were known as Saracens in those days) they decided to put the others to the sword. Various Crusades took place resulting in the death of tens of thousands of people, both Christians and Muslims, but when reason prevailed they realized — both the Christians and the Muslims realized that both great religions could exist in amity, side by side without clashes, without hostilities, and without war. And since that time Christianity and Islam existed side by side in amity. Now in the twentieth century, of course, there is religious tolerance. Of course, there may be some exceptional cases in certain parts of the world, but generally speaking what humanity did not experience say, a hundred or two hundred years ago, is a reality now. Although there was no religious tolerance two or three generations ago, there is today religious tolerance.

With the same analogy, I may say, and I am sure you will agree with me, that in the second half of the twentieth century there is no political tolerance. We should not be surprised. Human nature is such that it likes to indulge in some passions like hatred and bitterness — sometimes even hysteria. But my feeling is, although there is no political tolerance in these days there will be political tolerance, perhaps in our generation and probably in the next one or two generations. This spirit of tolerance, this philosophy of live and let live, this concept of trying to understand the other's point of view, has been what Swami Vivekananda strove to put across — particularly to the American people. I think it is a very great lesson to be learned from the teachings of Swamiji.

When we say that his main mission here was a search for a synthesis and an appeal for tolerance, we should also try to understand the concept of culture, of civilization. The concept of civilization, of course, is very difficult to define — there is a mistaken impression, assumption, if I may say so, regarding the concept of civilization. There seems to be a general feeling that there is a kind of civilization existing in the West and a different type of civilization existing in the East. I feel that this a fallacy. Civilization connotes certain qualities of the heart. A civilized Indian, for instance, cannot be distinguished mentally and spiritually — morally and spiritually, from a civilized American. But a civilized Indian or a civilized American will find themselves very different from any of their compatriots in their own countries; so we cannot classify civilization in a particular region. It is primarily concerned with the qualities of the heart and the mind.

There is also another misconception, that wars and tensions were generated by conflicts of civilizations or conflicts of cultures. I think this is also a fallacy. If you read history you will find that England and France, or France and Germany, had wars for centuries, off and on, although they belonged to the same system of civilization and the same system of culture. The same can be said of many Asian countries which have been, throughout the centuries, at war with one another, although they belonged to the same culture and they subscribed to the same religious systems. So tensions and conflicts do not arise necessarily from the conflicts of culture, or the conflicts of civilizations. They rise primarily out of the evil in human beings,

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irrespective of geographical regions. I think this fact was also stressed by Swami Vivekananda in many of his speeches and statements.

He, of course, attempted to teach many of his American friends the methods and procedures involved in meditation and contemplation which have been the traditional methods of finding our own selves. As I said earlier, the stress of education in Asia, and particularly in India, which is a very rich cultural country for thousands of years, has been to discover what is happening inside of us. I have said earlier that the stress of education in the West has been traditionally for the intellectual development of man. But in Asia, particularly in India, we try to discover what is happening inside of us by methods of contemplation and meditation, which, of course, is very difficult for the Western audiences to understand. I think Swami Vivekananda attempted to present a very simple exposition of these methods of contemplation and meditation so that the Westerners may not be lopsided in their development — only exclusively in the intellectual field. Because he felt, very rightly, that the mere intellectual development will lead only to the discovery of what is outside of us. In America, in Europe, in Russia, in these countries, what is outside of us is very clearly defined while at the same time what is inside of us remains a deep, dark, jungle tract. So he brought out this idea of meditation and contemplation, with some success, of course, as you all know from many of the publications published since his visit here, and I think it may perhaps be appropriate for me to read one of his statements regarding this method of meditation and contemplation.

This is what Swamiji wrote on meditation : 'You must keep the mind fixed on one object ; meditation should be like an unbroken stream of oil. The ordinary man's mind is scattered on different objects, and at the time of meditation, too, the mind is at first apt to wander. Let any desire whatever arise in the mind ; sit calmly and watch what sorts of ideas are coming. By continuing to watch in that way, the mind becomes calm and there are no thought-waves in it. These waves represent the thought activity of the mind. Those things that you have previously thought about too deeply have transformed themselves into a sub-conscious current, and therefore they come up in the mind in meditation. The rise of these waves. or thoughts, during meditation is evidence that your mind is tending towards concentration.' To my knowledge this is the simplest recipe to practise this very noble and very desirable art of meditation and contemplation which is still being practised in many parts of Asia.

Then Swami Vivekananda among many of his messages had this very significant and very pertinent message for these tense times. He said, and I quote, 'In this country I do not come to convert you to a new belief. I want you to keep your own belief. I want to make the Methodist a better Methodist, the Presbyterian a better Presbyterian, the Unitarian a better Unitarian.' On this subject also I think it is worth quoting his attitude toward religious tolerance which, to me, is one of the wisest maxims which ever came into my experience. He said, 'I accept all the religions that were in the past, and worship them all. I worship God with every one of them, in whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the Mohammedan ; I shall enter the Christian church and kneel before the Crucifix ; I shall enter the Buddhist temple, where I shall take refuge in Buddha and his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light which enlightens the hearts of everyone. Not only shall I do these things, but I shall keep my heart open for all that may come in the future.'

Those are very wise words and, friends, on this auspicious occasion when we are doing honour to one of the greatest men of all time, let us dedicate ourselves anew to this pledge : to make Christians better Christians, Hindus better Hindus, Muslims better Muslims, Buddhists better Buddhists, and Jews better Jews.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND THE BUILDING OF MODERN INDIA

(*Continued from Page* 200)

to progress with its majority community in such a state of disarray ? No, it was to be resurrected. But it is only in the low land of humility and suppression, seeds sown sprout into life. This is what the Swami did. And his prophetic vision has been turning historic day by day. With the national awakening of the Hindu community there is an all round awakening in the country. This is inevitable. And if the Swami saw this inevitability and took steps to expedite it, he certainly has done the greatest service to India, to the building up of the Indian nation. If India was to be reborn as a nation, Indians must wake up to the entire history of India, from its earliest period of legends to the distant future. That is integral India.

In spite of their Rājasūya and Aśvamedha yajñas, the Hindus had no idea of a politically united India. It dawned in the mind of the Maharashtra saint, Samartha Ramadas, whose disciple, Shivaji tried his best to put it into life. The Muslims and the English, since the time of Akbar had this idea and consciously tried to realize it. But both wanted to remain as conquerors ruling over a subject people, which was against the idea of a nation. The Hindus were, therefore, thought best to imbibe the new idea of an integral India, because their ancestral Ṛṣis laid a sound cultural foundation for the political superstructure. The Swami took advantage of this.

But the Hindus were hopelessly divided. Their quarrels among themselves, for petty local customs, were more bitter than those with the other two communities, who were merrily making dents into their folds. As no chain is stronger than its weakest link, wisdom lay in making the weakest link as strong as possible ; and this should be the first and foremost task of a nation builder. In working almost solely for the Hindus, the Swami did nothing else but this. The Hindus being the majority community it stands to reason that they should be made the strongest — not to use their strength like Titans against all others for their own maximum enjoyment, but to apply it for the good of all, to sacrifice and dedicate themselves for the welfare of all. That is the idea behind his scheme of Brāhmaṇising all, a real Brāhmaṇa is one who has no external possession and whose internal possessions such as learning, moral excellences and skill are all directed to commonweal. Commonweal indeed, but not to exploit and oppress others outside the nation but to raise oneself towards *abhyudaya* — hence to culture the feeling of brotherliness towards all humanity. That being Swamiji's idea, could he have gone against the interest of other communities of India or have ignored the welfare of other communities ? When he takes up the fallen brothers to the level of other brothers, makes them decent, strong, wise and pious, when these other brothers, instead of turning up their nose in contempt would welcome them as worthy comrades-in-arm, then alone would have come the time to resume integral India's march towards a glorious nationhood. His exhortation to take up the work of uplifting the Pariahs, the masses and women first, in that order, has the same idea behind it — to make the weakest and the most neglected, strong and forward and worthy of comradeship.

II

With the foresight of a true realist Swamiji set out for unifying and strengthening the Hindu society and bringing out and holding before the Hindus, the strength-giving message of the Vedas and Upaniṣads. It was a stupendous task — to bring solidarity in the hopelessly divided Hindu fold. So much emphasis was laid, for at least half a millennium, on the particulars that the general concept of being a Hindu was totally absent. Everyone thought himself to be a lover of Krishna, or Rama, or Shiva or any Devi ; or belonging to this village or that village ; or to this caste or that ; nobody felt himself to be a Hindu or an Indian or a

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Vedist or a Vedantist. Not only were the masses totally neglected, but they were socially suppressed and economically depressed; and they were further sub-divided into untouchables and unapproachables. Women lost their social dignity and were deprived of their education. The higher castes were narrow and arrogant, and though highly learned, were foolish as not to understand their real interest as a nation. Even pundits, well-versed in the Vedantic doctrines, would not practise them in life but follow local customs, meaningless and detrimental to national solidarity, and would force them on the masses by social boycott. There were people who were immensely rich, side by side with those who could not get a meal a day, and therefore were unconcerned about what was going on about those who were all reduced to the sub-human level. Such a heterogeneous people, so hopelessly divided and so keenly jealous of one another, were to be roused and raised.

The Swami pondered and meditated on this as he would on God, till the two coalesced, and India became his God. He observed, that the inside of Hindu India, was good and noble, as in the days of the Vedanta and the Buddha; that the tyrants and the victims, in all their uglinesses, were not as bad as their counterparts in other countries; that the light was still burning inside each heart as steadily as ever, only the coverings, by accumulations of ages, had become too thick, in many cases impenetrable. The coverings were to be cracked and cast to the winds. The superstitions were many and varied, varying with different groups of people. To study the problems, in all their bearings and to find out their solutions, the Swami undertook travel on foot throughout the length and breadth of India and mixed with all classes of people. The solution came in a vivid form while this holy pilgrimage was half gone through. In intimate talks with the Rajahs and Maharajahs in India he revealed his plan. A few appreciated. But they had not the courage to do anything for fear of the British Residents and officials. Nothing could be expected of them. The orthodoxy were under the heels of the gerund-grinder pundits. The Swami's ideas were so revolutionary, socially, economically and even spiritually, that even after the lapse of sixty years and more, people, even those who have studied his lectures and writings have not been able to understand them fully, far less to convert them in life. The Swami saw it was not one life's or one generation's work. It would require three generations of devoted and dedicated workers, for whose training, more practical than theoretical, an organization with various centres of activity, both in and outside India, was necessary. Sleeping India was not expected to hear and follow him. Slave India must hear his voice through the echo of her master, the West. The West gave him what he wanted — the authority and some men and money. India's cheques to be cashed in India had to be honoured by the Western banks — this is still the situation.

On his return from the West, an organization, viz. the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, was started; and the Swami himself now armed with authority, broadcast his plan and purpose in words of thunder and India heard him adoringly. Paradoxically this divided the country into two loving groups — the worker, dedicated and full of rajas and fearless, and their loving and admiring helpers, giving them their wherewithals to serve the country and to maintain themselves and their training centres. Thus seeing the work started and finding the machine well-greased and in working order, the Swami a true leader that he was, left the field for his workers to continue the task devotedly.

This programme, as has already been pointed out, was laid down for unifying and strengthening the Hindu society and religion. But this is only a step, though a major step, in the building of the Indian nation. The work is so arduous and stupendous that after sixty years of work by the Mission it seems that we have not even touched the fringe of the problems. But the consciousness of the nation has been roused.

Let us now come to the definite problems in the Hindu society. Its most important pro-

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blem, which is giving any amount of trouble to the political parties and the administrators of our days, is the caste system. Should it go or remain or change shape? To answer this we have to consider whether 'caste' is different from 'class'. Most people have taken it as qualitatively different from 'class', which is current in all countries, including the red. If, however, we analyze their criticisms we find them centering round two points, the privileges enjoyed by the so-called higher 'castes' and their hereditary nature. Of the two, the first is common with the higher classes in all the countries the world over. And it is against these privileges, which have assumed very ugly forms, even in the West, that the reds raised their standard of revolt. But even in the red countries the writers and the scientists are a special class, enjoying privileges denied to others. We do not grudge it, we take it as but natural; but the focal points, we say, should change now and then to suit the exigencies of progressing societies. So the other point, its hereditary nature, remains to be answered. The right of primogeniture may debar many from inheriting the ancestral property but not the ancestral intelligence and family training. Heredity dies hard and may not be murdered, but may be properly utilized. Is it not a fact that some of the best labour leaders or even red leaders come from the aristocracy; and have not the labour and communist party derived benefits from them? India's fault was that she recognized it and legalized it and reaped the benefit therefrom for several centuries. When, however, stagnation set in there were none to reform the society or point out the defects of the age. The reason for the indifference and failure the Swami stated in most pungent words — the privileged would not part with their privileges, the educated would not educate others. And it is the same picture throughout the world; but India alone is to be blamed because she has to be! This is the Swami's defence of the caste system.

But did the Swami want to retain the present caste system? The Swami was born unorthodox and died unorthodox. When not even in his teens he was seen touching the hubble-bubbles of various castes with his lips in order to see if the heaven would fall, if he did not obey the caste-rules. To his last days he remained a deadly enemy of castes as prevailed in the society. But he was a supporter of the system in another sense. By caste system he meant the system as described in the Gītā, i.e. social divisions according to mental and professional characteristics of man. If this caste system, as sanctioned by the Gītā, is once admitted, it follows, as a corollary, that with advancement of knowledge and change and improvement or deterioration of the economic condition of the society there should be occasional, even periodical adjustments and readjustments of the system. To be stereotyped in castes is to court death, to which point India almost came. Now the country is on the way to industrialization, whose staunch advocate the Swami was. New industries would entail regroupings of men and women with new sets of guiding principles. A country's economy has surely a hand in shaping society. So the system will remain but castes will change. As too rapid changes go against stabilization, society, to be stable, must stand against constant changes in all matters, economy including. Here comes in the other danger of castes being hereditary. It is always safe to prefer the mean and avoid the extremes. And in the tussle, between man's will to follow the mean and nature's urge to go to the extreme, progress blesses mankind.

(To be continued)

CORRIGENDUM

Please read as "catholicity" in place of "catholocity" on page 200, column 1 last but one line of first para, also read "Grecian" for "Greecian", in second column of the same page, second line and "Roman" for "Romain" on the third line.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND INDIAN CULTURE

SWAMI PREMESHANANDA

[Swami Premeshananda, a disciple of the Holy Mother, is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and a very learned Swami. He was in charge of Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Dacca for a long time. His poems in Bengali on Sri Ramakrishna were very much appreciated even by the direct disciples of the Master. This is a free translation of a part of the notes of his discussions on Indian Culture, Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji taken down in Bengali. The later portions will be published serially in the *Vedanta Kesari*. — *Ed.*]

From the almost irresistible attraction that Sri Ramakrishna felt for Swami Vivekananda and from the high praise that Sri Ramakrishna lavished on him, we regarded Swamiji as a very great sage. But our imagination failed to conceive what he was when we read what Holy Mother, once in a divine vision, saw of him — she saw Sri Ramakrishna merge into Swamiji. What then was impossible, on this earth, for a person into whom the infinite Brahman, the Avatar, the Incarnation, Sri Ramakrishna, had entered! Perhaps that is the reason why we find Swamiji's lectures and writings so inspiring, so sweet.

II

Puranas speak about the 'associate-bodies'* of an Incarnation. What is meant by that? 'Associate-bodies' of an Incarnation are those persons through whose help an Incarnation fulfils his divine mission. Sri Ramachandra, it is said, brought his younger brothers into this world for his divine purpose, so too did Sri Krishna bring associates like Sankarshaṇa (Balarama), Pradyumna and Aniruddha. But these things appeared to us as very queer; we could neither understand them well, nor could we believe in them. From the meagre descriptions given in the *purāṇas* we could know very little about the relation between the Incarnations, Rama and Krishna, and their associates. However, it has been quite different this time. The divine play of the greatest of the Incarnations, Sri Ramakrishna was enacted only the other day. With the help of modern facilities we have been able to know authoritatively every detail of his life history. In Sri Ramakrishna's life we see the full manifestation of Truth. Again, in the Holy Mother's life we see the application of this eternal Truth in the practical field; and in Swamiji's life the full realization of this ideal, as well as the logic behind the ideal's transformation into the actual (in work) has been seen. Sri Ramakrishna, the Holy Mother and Swamiji were only three forms of the same Being. Sannyasins and other householder disciples surely helped Sri Ramakrishna in his mission but the Holy Mother and Swamiji were his *alter egos*. They came into this world with one single purpose, one single motive, — about this there is not the least doubt.

It is written in the Yoga Śāstras that the yogis go through enjoyments and sufferings in their entirety in one life, in order to take up a pure body for the sake of attaining liberation. Similarly, the Incarnations of the Lord too take with them, but in a larger measure, ever pure associates for the well-being of the whole of mankind. We have the Master's own opinion about his identity with Swamiji, both expressed and implied, in the incident in which Sri Ramakrishna makes Narendra smoke from his own hands and from the same pipe which he had used and was going to use

NOTE: This article forms a summary of the notes of a discussion on Indian culture, Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda which the writer had with a member of the Order. It is possible therefore, that there may be repetition of the same idea or the idea being stressed in different ways. It is requested that the readers take this into consideration while going through these pages.

* कायव्यूह

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again. Again, the Holy Mother has confirmed from her divine visions, the non-difference between the Master and Swamiji. And, about herself she had definitely and repeatedly told that the Master and herself were not two, but one. Sri Ramakrishna's disciples too looked upon Swamiji with the same deference as they did the Master. An instance of such devotion to Swamiji by Baburam Maharaj (Swami Premananda) is related in *Talks with Swami Vivekananda.*

III

In our land the word 'Digvijaya' (conquest of the four corners of the world) is widely known. There was a custom among the kings of old to go out for a conquest (in the then accessible parts of the country), when they desired to perform the *Rājasūya Yajña.* Even in the history of other countries too, this going out on a conquest happened. To mention a few instances, the exploits of Alexander, Chengiz Khan, Napoleon etc. are not unknown.

Of course, from our point of view these conquests were barbaric. Against this we have what is popularly termed the other type of conquest, 'Digvijaya', of the Buddhist monks. They too went out, travelled far and wide and spread their religion in distant countries. Śri Śankarācārya travelled all over India, defeated the adherents of non-Vedic religions and brought them back into the fold of the Eternal Religion. This too has been termed by some as 'Digvijaya'. But it goes without saying that in the face of Swamiji's 'conquest', of the West in the present age, all other historic conquests pale into insignificance. For in ancient times the world of transactions and contacts was so small, the people living in distant lands knew each other so little. Compared with that world we cannot but call this present day world altogether a new one.

But to put on a par the historical or geographical conquests of kings and the preaching of religion by the Buddhists or Śankara or call it by the same term, is, we think, mere childishness. There is a world of difference between the two. The Incarnations preach religion in order to bring to the righteous path, mankind, which is in a sorry plight due to its straying away and not to defeat people with the purpose of establishing supremacy or tyrannizing over them. These noble souls feel the misery of all creatures as their own, and therefore in order to save others they dispel their evil tendencies and teach them the cultivation of good ones. On account of this immense service, people spontaneously offer them the highest regard and love. Unfortunately these actions of the Great Ones appear to the ignorant as the means they adopt to fulfil their own selfish ends.

Again, the followers of other religions, without understanding the message of their own prophets, have perpetrated atrocities and trampled down on people professing religions other than their own. And the pity of it is, these tramplings have been jubilantly termed as great conquests by the ignorant. So when Swamiji placed before the West the grand philosophy of Hinduism and received great approbation, the Hindus justly observed that the cause of the Eternal Religion has been vindicated. But in Swamiji's triumph there was not the slightest desire to domineer over others. His only aim was to proclaim the eternal truths to mankind and never was it a conquest in the sense of tyrannizing. As a parallel, we can take for instance Euclid's Geometry. It is studied all over the world. But because of this can the Greeks think that the whole world has come under their sway? Again, is the aim of a mother, who takes care of her son with all her heart and with all her soul, to domineer over her son?

The whole of humanity, due to ignorance, had become blind to the Eternal truths, creating illusive differences between man and man; people fought, like children, amongst themselves and are doing it even today. Vivekananda who felt intensely, more than a mother, for our well-being, gave his life for the retrieval of humanity by the propagation of these eternal truths, which were discovered

(*Continued on Page* 328)

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SOME INCIDENTS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S CHILDHOOD

SWAMI SUDDHASATWANANDA

[Swami Suddhasatwananda is the Manager, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras. He narrates here Swamiji's childhood days in brief with a number of illustrations depicting the incidents.—*Ed.*]

People are mostly acquainted with the later life of Swami Vivekananda, especially from the date when the 'Lion of Vedanta' roared through his voice and the Western world acclaimed him as the best and greatest exponent of the Hindu religion.

His life as a Parivrajaka (wandering monk), when he, as a penniless, unknown and unhonoured Sannyasin, had travelled on foot from the Himalayas to the Kanyakumari, which is full of thrilling incidents, is also not read, discussed or heard with much enthusiasm. And it is needless to say that very few know about his childhood. We say, 'morning shows the day', 'child is the father of man', but when we see the bright and glorious light of mid-day, alas, we forget the soothing and peaceful morning. Generally this happens everywhere.

But we cannot deny the fact that the future Swami Vivekananda was hidden in the child Naren, endearingly called Bileh by his mother and others. The incidents of his childhood give us a clear indication of and throw much light on his future greatness. Really, if we study those incidents, we will find that each one of them was so significant, each one had so much bearing on one or the other aspect of his later glorious life.

Bhubaneswari Devi, though she was the mother of four daughters, was not blessed with a son, till January 12th, 1863. She prayed to her chosen deity Lord Siva and requested her aunt, residing at the holy Varanasi, to offer worship to Lord Vireswara there on her behalf. The simple lady with all devotion and faith started worshipping Vireswara Siva every day with Gangajal and Bilwa leaf. The offerings attended with the heartfelt prayers of Bhubaneswari Devi must have reached the Lord and satisfied Him immensely. Some months before the birth of Narendranath, one day his mother spent the whole day in the shrine in the presence of the Lord, praying with utmost devotion and earnestness and when she was asleep that night she had a wonderful dream, very vivid, very delightful. She saw in her dream, 'Lord Siva arouse Himself out of His transcendent meditation and take the form of a male child who was to be born as her own son'. Her mind was filled with unspeakable joy at the confident thought that her long and heartfelt prayer was soon going to be answered and her expectations were really fulfilled on the holy hour of the dawn of the *Makara Samkaranti day*, January 13, 1863, when the divine baby illumined her lap. Father

The august advent

Viswanath Dutta was immensely happy. The constellation of stars at the auspicious moment

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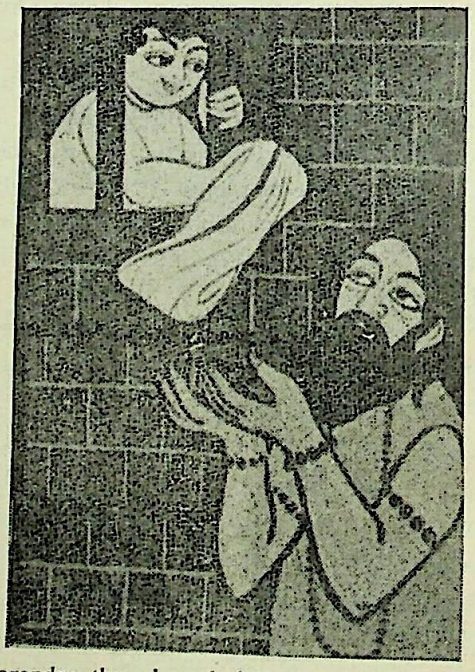
of the birth indicated that the child would be a great Apostle of peace and fraternity. Another St. Paul was born to be joined with his Master who was so eagerly waiting for him only a few miles away at the temple garden of Dakshineswar.

Narendranath grew to be a very naughty child. Sometimes, he would become so restless that it would be impossible for the mother to bring the child under control. He would be playing the hide and seek game with the mother who would be chasing him to catch him. No amount of promises, threats and caresses would quieten the boy. There was only one way to bring him round, which the mother discovered after making various futile experiments, and that was to pour cold water on his head.

Mother pouring cold water on his head

Whenever child Naren would become restless and would go beyond control, the mother would pour sufficient cold water on his head repeating 'Siva', 'Siva' in his ears. She would threaten him saying that if he were naughty, Siva would not take him to Kailasa and at once he would become calm. Was it an indication of the fact that with the chanting of Siva's name, Naren would at once feel his affinity with Him? Sometimes the mother would be heard saying, 'I prayed to Lord Siva for a son and He has sent me one of His ghosts.'

From his childhood, Narendra had a great fascination for Sannyasins. He would be greatly delighted if any Sannyasin would come to his house. He would talk with them as if they were his own. He would never send away any Sannyasin or beggar empty-handed. One day a monk came to Narendra's house for alms. At that time he was wearing a new cloth wrapped round his waist. Seeing nothing at hand to give to the monk, he took off his new cloth and gave it to him. The Sadhu was very happy, tied the cloth round his head as a turban and went away thanking the boy. His parents sometimes felt embarrassed over this, but Naren would not hear anybody, so the parents thought it fit to lock him in an upstairs room whenever any monk or beggar would come to the door. Once when he was thus imprisoned, he saw a monk with matted hairs on the street asking for alms. Narendra at once started throwing clothes to him through the window.



Narendra throwing clothes through the window

Narendra's love for the Sadhus from his childhood was a clear indication of his future

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life and his giving away things would bespeak of his deep love and sympathy for the poor.

Narendra would play and quarrel with his sisters. What a great tease he was! Sometimes, the sisters would chase him to punish him, but it was so difficult to catch him! If by chance, the sisters were able to overtake him, he would at once jump into the open drain full of broken mud vessels and filth and make faces at his sisters showing his fingers and saying, 'Now come and catch me'. The sisters were to move away in great amazement lest they should be polluted.

Narendra standing in the open drain

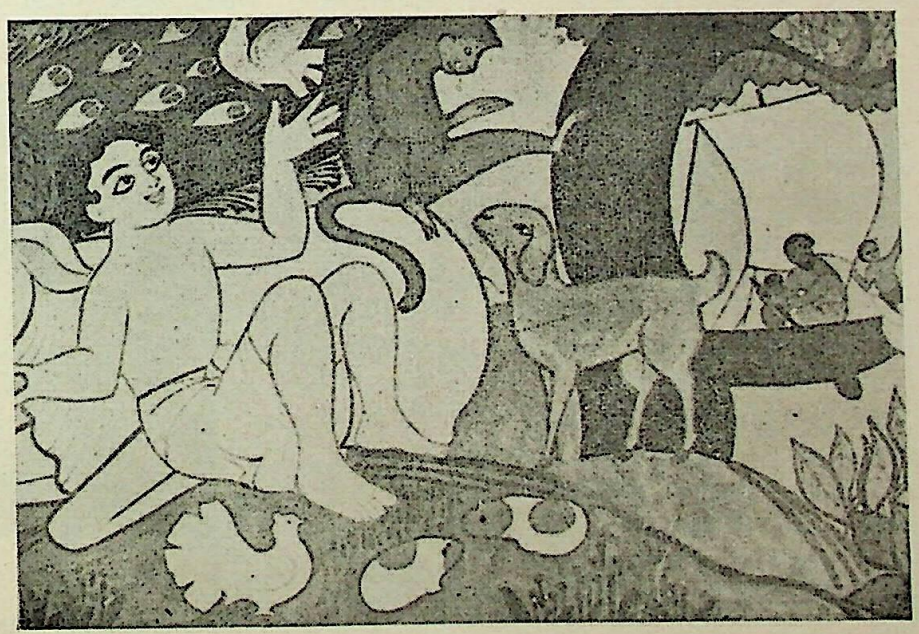
garlands round their necks and put vermilion on their forcheads. He was absolutely fearless, rather he would feel happy in their company. The animals and birds could read his heart and loved him very dearly.

Even when he became a Sannyasin and was staying at the Belur Math, people were astonished to see his love and affection for the Math cows, goats, and dogs. Perhaps from his very childhood, he could see the same affectionate Lord present in all and that may be the reason why we find the same feelings afterwards echoing in his writings.

In those days there were no motor cars. There were innumerable horse carriages of different types. Narendra, in his childhood had great attraction for those horses and especially for the coachman. To him the coachman having a big moustache with his turban on and driving whip in hand, with a whiz in the mouth, was a magnificent person and one of the ambitions of his childhood days was to become a coachman. In fact, once being asked by his father as to what he would become when he would grow, he proudly replied that he would become a coachman.

His father had a coach and the coachman was Naren's friend, philosopher and guide. He

Viswanath Dutta had tamed a number of animals such as peacocks, monkeys, goats, pigeons, parrots and a few guinea pigs, apart from cows and horses. All these were Naren's pet animals and most of them were his playmates. The animals and birds would not be afraid when Narendra would come to them. He would bathe them, feed them, caress them. He was especially fond of the cow. He would some times place



Narendra quite happy in the company of animals

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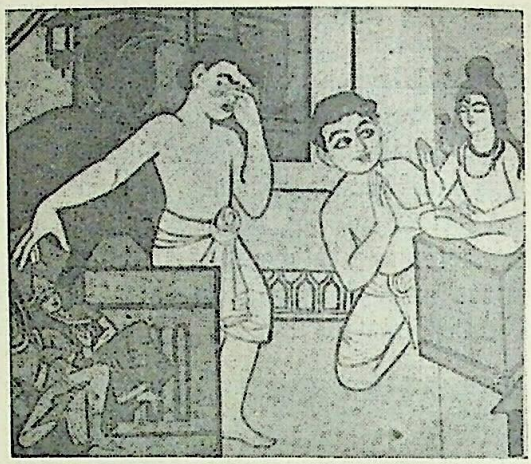
would often be found engaged in serious talks with him and his opinions were of great importance to young Naren.

Hearing the *Ramayana* from elders often, he became greatly devoted to Sri Rama and Sita and he became eager to worship them. With Narendra, to think, was to work. So, one day, he collected a few coppers and along with a Brahmin playmate went to the market, purchased a clay image of Rama and Sita. After returning he immediately installed the image in the staircase room at the top and started worshipping it closing the doors and became absorbed in meditation. His long absence made the mother very anxious and when he was not found anywhere, all went up and seeing the door closed started knocking at it; but there was no reply. At last they broke open the door and saw to their great astonishment and relief young Bileh in deep meditation in front of the image of Rama and Sita. Often he would be found meditating and worshipping and his love and devotion to Rama and Sita grew deeper.

In the meantime a funny thing happened. One day after worship he went to the stable to his groom-friend and in the course of discussion, the groom told him, 'It is very bad to marry'. He said it from his personal experience as his married life was not at all peaceful. There would often be quarrels and dissensions and he would find it difficult to manage and feed a number of children. He convinced the boy that a married man would generally lose all freedom and happiness and lead a miserable life. Young Narendra at once determined not to marry. But a great problem arose. Rama and Sita whom he loved so much, to whom he was so devoted, were married. He felt miserable and started sobbing. On being asked by the mother, he told her everything to which the mother replied smilingly, 'What does it matter, you worship Siva!' In the evening, Narendra went into the puja room, gazed at the images of Rama and Sita, took them up and with a heavy sigh and deep sorrow he threw them down. Next day he purchased an image of Lord Siva, installed Him in the same place and began worshipping Him.



Narendra throwing away the image of Rama-Sita, started worshipping Siva

Though Naren threw away the image of Rama and Sita, his love and great enthusiasm to hear the stories from the *Ramayana* never waned. He was never tired of hearing the stories repeated. Wherever there would be Ramayana Katha (discourses), Narendra would be there from the beginning to the end. He would often pester the elders to tell him stories from the *Ramayana*, and in the evenings, he would sit on his mother's lap and would hear them with rapt attention forgetting everything.

Hearing the Ramayana

While narrating the Ramayana stories, the mother would often mention about Hanuman

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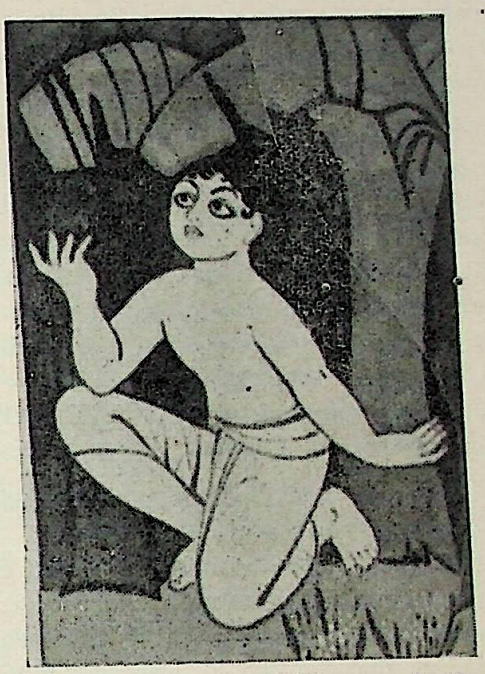
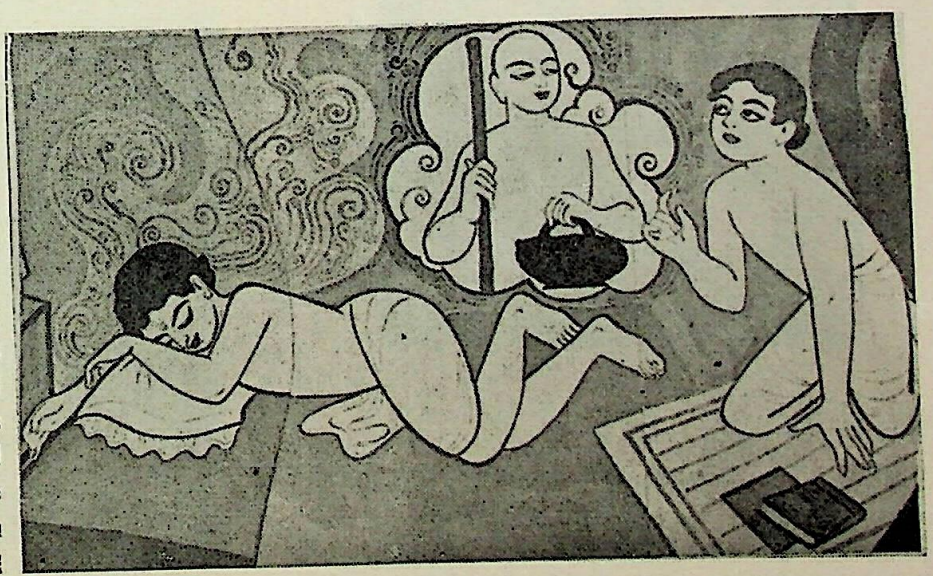
(the monkey chief), how he was deeply devoted to Rama, how he by one jump cleared the ocean and went to Lanka (Ceylon) to bring news of Sita, how he brought the entire Gandhamadan mountain when Lakshmana fell in the battle, how he was ever ready to serve his Lord Rama and about a host of his other virtues. Hearing all these, young Naren became greatly devoted to Hanuman. One evening while he was attending a Harikatha in a neighbouring house, he came to know that Hanuman lived in banana groves and could be seen by pure and earnest souls. Though it was quite late, the thought of seeing Hanuman had entered so deep in his mind, that he forgot about food and home and entering a nearby banana grove waited there to see Hanuman, with breathless expectation.

After waiting for a long time, when Hanuman did not make his appearance, he came back home sorely disappointed. Coming to know the cause of his sorrow, others consoled him saying, 'Today Hanuman must have gone somewhere in connection with his Lord's work, so you could not see him.' This pacified him a little. Later on he would mention this incident and speak glowingly about Hanuman, whose ideal life and noble character had created a deep and lasting impression in his mind. Once he thought of erecting Hanuman's marble statue at the Belur Math.



Naren in expectation of Hanuman in the banana grove

Another peculiarity with him was that he would see a strange vision every night when he would go to sleep. As soon as he closed his eyes, he would see between his eyebrows a wonderful bright light which would change hues and gradually expand and burst, enveloping his whole body in a flood of lustrous radiance. He would get drowned in that ocean of lustre and then fall asleep. It was a daily occurrence with him and he thought it was everyone's experience. Afterwards his spiritual teacher (Sri Ramakrishna) asked him, 'Naren, do you see any light between your eyebrows before you sleep?' He replied in the affirmative. This experience continued throughout his life; though in the later part of his life it was not so frequent. It was a clear sign of a great spiritual past. Sri



Narendra immersed in the ocean of light and seeing the vision of a Sannyasin

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Ramakrishna hearing of this said, 'It is the sign of a *dhyana siddha* (one adept in meditation).'

One day, meditation over, he was sitting quietly in a closed room when he saw an effulgent divine figure appear before him. It was the vision of a Sannyasin with shaven head and Danda (staff) and Kamandalu (waterpot) in hand. He looked at Naren, as if he wanted to say something. After some time, the figure vanished and was never seen again. Narendra used to say afterwards 'Perhaps he was Lord Buddha'.

As children are fond of play, Narendra would find joy in playing at meditation. He would often be found sitting with closed eyes either before an image of God or on the roof. He would be sometimes so much absorbed in meditation that he would lose all outward consciousness and would be sitting for a long time. Sometimes he would sit alone and sometimes along with his playmates. Naturally they were not accustomed to meditation, but they had to close their eyes and sit erect at the behest of Naren but the next moment they would be looking at Naren whether he had opened his eyes, and whether his meditation was over. Once while Naren was thus meditating with his playmates and had become deeply absorbed in it, all of a sudden a cobra appeared there. Seeing the cobra, the other boys fled away raising a hue and cry. This attracted the attention of the parents who came running and became terribly upset to see the cobra with its hood raised. They were at a loss as to what to do. Fortunately, the snake slowly glided away and they heaved a sigh of relief. On being asked Narendra said, 'I knew nothing of the snake or anything else. I was feeling an inexpressible bliss.'

Narên lost in meditation

Naren was fond of other plays also. His energy was indomitable and sometimes his friends would not be able to keep pace with him. He was a born leader. Whether in his childhood, or during his student life or during his monastic life, he was always the leader. Sri Ramakrishna, his guru, made him the leader of all his sannyasin disciples. He had such a wonderful personality that others needed no asking to accept his leadership. All would obey him spontaneously and feel glad and sometimes proud to do so. They would feel safe under his leadership and would firmly believe that if Naren were the leader, then everything would go on all right, there would be no cause for any fear.

While he was a young lad of five or six, one of his favourite games was 'King and the Court'. Naturally he would play the part of the king. The highest step of the staircase leading to the puja room would form the throne. There

Naren as the king in the play 'King and the Court'

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he would instal himself with all grandeur and gravity as the king. One of his playmates would become the Prime Minister, another the Commander-in-Chief and so on. They would be standing with folded hands before Naren the king, for orders. The impersonating princes and other dignitaries would be seated on the lower steps according to their ranks. Naren would hear complaints and grievances and administer justice with royal dignity. Nobody would be bold enough to disobey him and he would put down the slightest insubordination by a stern and angry glance.

Narendra's bravery and presence of mind, even when he was a boy of six, merit admiration and deserve special mention. There are a number of incidents in his life which are clear indications of the above virtues. Only one such is mentioned here.

Once, with a companion he went to see a fair. There they purchased an image of Siva. It was almost dark when they were returning. Naren was walking very fast. But when he turned back to look for his friend he saw his companion almost being trampled under the hoofs of a galloping horse. Risking his own life, he ran towards his friend with utmost speed, caught hold of the boy and jumped on to the footpath, saving the friend from certain death. It all happened in the twinkling of an eye and the bystanders profusely praised the boldness and presence of mind of child Naren.

Naren saving his friend

We all know how vehemently Swami Vivekananda denounced untouchability and oppression that was practised in the name of caste. He looked upon everyone as a child of God and would address others : 'Ye, children of immortality.' How this was ingrained in his mind even when he was a mere child, will be evident from the following incident. Naren's father Viswanath Dutta was a flourishing Attorney of the Calcutta High Court and among his clients, there were Muslims, Christians, Brahmins, non-brahmins and others. In order to entertain them, tobacco pipes (Hukka) were provided separately for each caste. Narendra used to notice carefully that each one of the client was using the tobacco pipe marked for a particular caste. It was a riddle to him. Why this distinction? What would happen if a Muslim would smoke from a Brahmin's tobacco pipe or *vice-versa*? And because

Narendra smoking from the pipes

some elders had threatened him once that one would lose one's caste if one would smoke from the other's pipe, he wanted to test it for himself. So one day when the father was busy talking to the clients outside and nobody was there in the room, young Naren made the cir-

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cuit of the pipes taking a whiff from every pipe including the one meant for the Mohammedans. But nothing happened, he did not find any change in him. The father who had entered at that juncture was amused to see Naren near the pipes and asked him what he was doing there. Narendra replied, 'I am testing whether I would lose my caste by smoking every pipe. But nothing has happened to me father!' and started laughing.

Even from his childhood, Narendra pooh-poohed all superstitions and he never knew what fear was. Sometimes because of this, his companions would find themselves in awkward situations, but Narendra's spirited protests and exhortations would make them also bold. He would not accept any statement which did not satisfy his reason and he would not believe in anything unless and until it would stand the test of reason to his satisfaction. In how many ways he tested even his own Guru, Sri Ramakrishna! He never accepted him in the beginning as an Avatara. He was not a person to believe in anything because some great one had said so. The following incident is illustrative of this characteristic of his. During holidays, he would sometimes go to the neighbouring house along with a friend, climb a big flowering tree and would enjoy swinging like a bat with his head downwards catching hold of a branch with the legs. The

Narendra swinging with his head down

grandfather of the house got afraid seeing young Naren so swinging, and ordered him to come down and never to climb that tree again. Narendra asked, 'What will happen if I climb?' The grandfather in order to frighten him said, 'There is a terrible Brahmadaitya (Brahmin's ghost) living on that tree and if you climb on it, it will break your neck'. Naren listened politely but as soon as the old man was out of sight, he climbed up the tree again. His friend was terribly afraid to hear about the ghost but Naren laughed at him saying, 'What an ass you are! My neck would have been off long ago, if there were really a ghost. Don't you understand that the grandfather has only threatened us so that we might not get on the tree again?'

Narendra could prepare his lessons in a very short time, so he had plenty of leisure. He would daily discover new games and new ways of recreation. Some times he would go with his friends to see the Museum, at other times he would get up the Ochterlony Monument and so on. Every time, it is needless to say, he would be the leader of the party. One day, he, along with a few of his friends, started in a boat to visit the Nawab's Zoological Gardens at Metiabruz, a suburb of Calcutta. They were very happy to see the animals there. While returning, one of the boys became very sick due to the tossing of the boat and vomited in it. When they came near the shore of the Ganga, the boatman would not let them go unless they had cleaned the boat. But the boys were not willing to do it. When his friends and the boatman were quarrelling, Narendranath jumped on to the shore and came running to the main road where he espied two British soldiers passing by. He approached them, caught one of them by the hand and in his broken English explained to them the tale of their woe and almost dragged them to the scene. The soldiers understood everything and commanded the boatman in a threatening voice to let the lads go. The boatman was terribly afraid on seeing the British soldiers and set the boys free immediately. Thus, through Naren's courage and presence of

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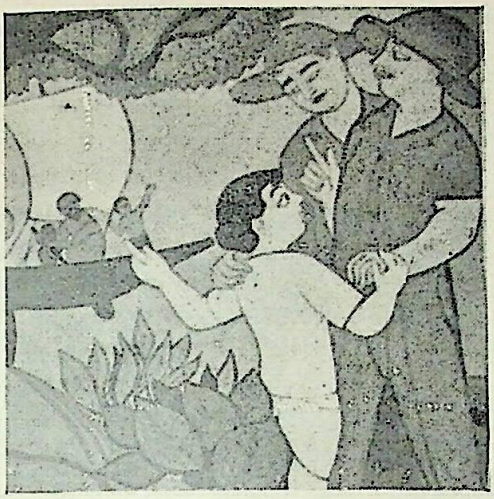

Narendra narrating the sad tale to the British soldiers

mind, the boys were saved from an embarrassing situation and had a hearty laugh over the incident.

Narendranath used to regularly attend the gymnasium of Sri Navagopal Mitra, with his friends. Once, the young boys were trying to set up a big trapeze. A crowd gathered to see the fun but none came forward to help them. There was an English sailor also in the crowd ; Narendranath beckoned him to come to their help. As the trapeze was being lifted, it slipped off their hands and knocked down the sailor unconscious. Thinking him to be dead, the other boys fled away but Narendra with great presence of mind tore away a piece of his cloth and bandaged the wound, sprinkled water on his face and started fanning him.

Narendra bandaging the wounded sailor

Gradually the sailor regained his consciousness and was removed to the neighbouring school-house. A doctor was called in, medicine was given and Narendra with all attention and kindness nursed him for a week, till he fully recovered, fed him and sent him away presenting him with a small purse, collected from his friends. What a humane touch and a spirit of service from such an early age !

Here is another story of his wonderful presence of mind. He could never be discouraged nor dissuaded from what he would like to do. He would hit upon some plan and get his wish fulfilled. The British warship, Syrapis had arrived at Calcutta, with the visiting Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII, on board. Naren's friends urged him to arrange for their visit to the Man-of-War. An English official was issuing permits to the intending visitors. His office was upstairs in a building at Chowringhee. Narendra with an application presented himself at the entrance. He was only eleven years of age then. Seeing him so young, the fearful looking *chaprasi* with long moustache and big turban on his head, frowned at him saying that he could not be allowed to go up. Narendra went round the building, saw a spiral staircase at the back. Undaunted he went up to the first floor by way of the spiral and stood in the queue. When his turn came, he saluted the officer, placed the application before him and got it signed by him. He was very happy and came down the main stair-case with his face beaming with the joy of success. The *chaprasi* was astonished to see him coming down and asked him, how he could manage to go up. Narendra, showing the order, replied with a proud smile, ' Oh, I am a magician '.

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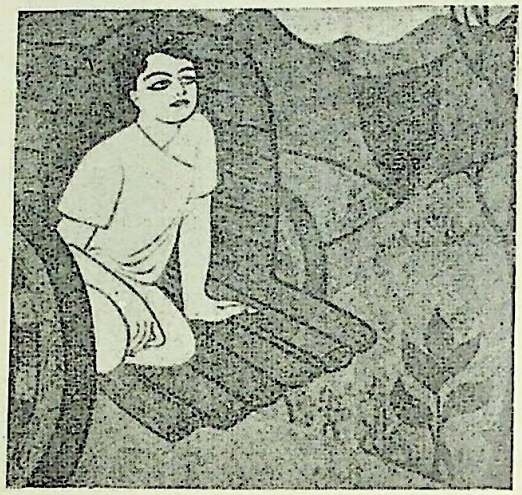
Narendra showing the permit to the *chaprasi*

We shall close this narration by mentioning one more incident.

In 1877 when Narendra was reading in the fourth form and was thirteen years old, he had to take his mother and sisters to Raipur in Central Provinces. They had to cross a long distance by bullock-cart through dense forests in the Vindhya range. The lofty hills on either side of the road, the verdant trees and creepers laden with beautiful flowers and the sweet chirping of the birds of different colours filled his heart with ineffable bliss. Suddenly, his eyes turned towards a beehive in a cleft in one of the hills. All these wonderful and enchanting scenes of natural beauty created a deep impression on his mind. Thinking in wonder of the majesty and power of the Divine Providence, he gradually lost all outward consciousness and lay in that state for a considerable period of time.



Narendra lost to outward consciousness seeing the natural beauty

The above incident shows how his spiritual insight was deepening. This was perhaps the first time when contemplating on the beauty of nature and thinking of the glory of the Lord, he ascended into the realm of the Unknown.

There are many other incidents, of his childhood and student life, which go to show that he was born with a definite mission to fulfil and to propagate a unique message for the redemption of mankind.

Did not Sri Ramakrishna commission him from among the great Saptarṣis (seven sages) to become his chief apostle ?

N.B.—We are indebted to Sri Viswaranjan Chakravarti, M.A. of Calcutta from whose paintings the above blocks have been made. The paintings were made by him as a labour of love for decorating the Children's Library corner in the Swami Vivekananda Centenary Building at the Ramakrishna Math, Madras-4.

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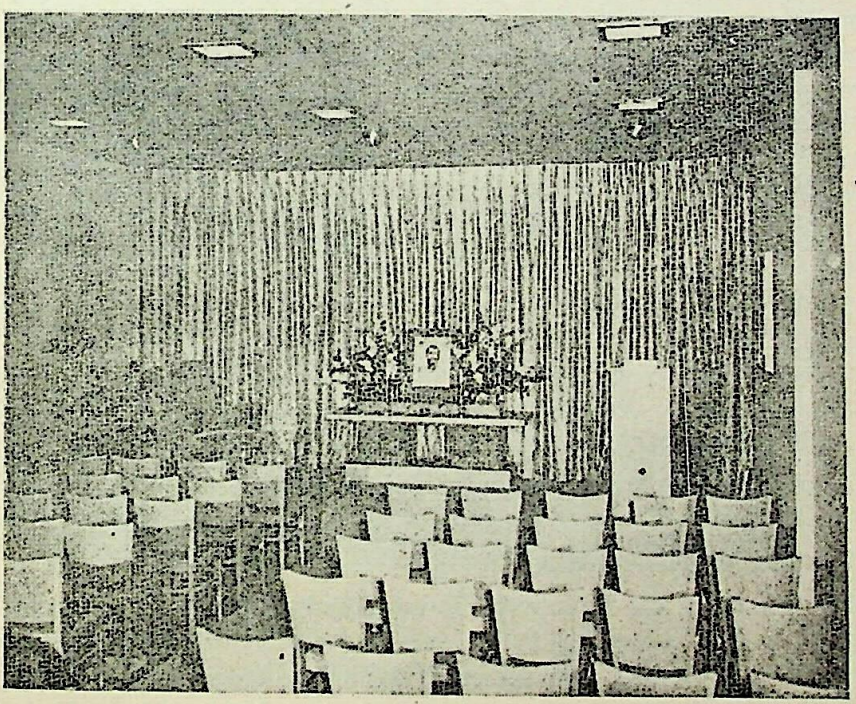
CENTRES OF THE RAMAKRISHNA ORDER IN THE WEST

Today we have in the West more than a dozen centres of the Ramakrishna Order, working for the propagation of the message of Swami Vivekananda, a message which Sri Ramakrishna lived, viz. (1) acceptance of all religions as true and as different pathways to God, and (2) the inherent divinity of man. This message was not peculiar to Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. It was the eternal message of the Vedas only relived and redemonstrated, before a forgetful world, over again. These ideas had gone out of India even earlier but mostly through books. This time Swami Vivekananda, the living Vedanta, went right into the market place, as it were, and gave it freely.

He travelled from one end of the United States of America to the other, lecturing and addressing gatherings, talking and discussing. Everywhere he went, the ideas, though perhaps new to many a one in the audience, attracted attention. Excepting among the bigoted they were well received. His personality, added to the rational outlook in his teachings captured a section of the intelligentsia. They requested the Swami to start a society where they could meet and discuss and keep the interest in the life of the spirit unflagging. Swamiji at their request started the Vedanta Society, of New York in 1894. This was the first centre of Vedanta in America. But the Swami could not be bound to any one place. He was not made for a small community. England called him. His own country was eagerly waiting for him. He was afraid that all his labours would go in vain if the society was not properly reared up. The members of the society too felt it. So to carry on his work in his absence, the Swami sent, in the first instance, for one of his brother disciples. Swami Saradananda came and some time later Swami Abhedananda also arrived in America. He left them in charge of the centres before returning to India in 1897. This was the nucleus of Swami Vivekananda's work in the West. Swami Saradananda returned to India, at the call of the leader, to shoulder the responsibility of the administration of the Ramakrishna Order. Swami Abhedananda lived in America for more than a quarter of a century preaching Vedanta.



The Vedanta Society, New York.

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During his first visit to America Swamiji seems to have confined and concentrated his activities to the eastern states. Chicago, New York, Boston, Washington, Detroit, Swampscot, Greenacre, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Salem, were some of the towns where he worked as can be seen from a perusal of his letters and lectures now available.

On his second visit to the West, we see him mostly in the western states of America. Los Angeles, San Francisco, Pasadena, Alameda are some of the towns that appear predominantly in his correspondence. It was during this visit in 1900 that the Swami established the Vedanta Society of Northern California at San Francisco, and left Swami Turiyananda in charge of it. The latter had accompanied Swami Vivekananda from India to help him in his work at his earnest request. Introducing Swami Turiyananda to the students of San Francisco Vedanta Society, Swamiji had said, 'In me you have seen the expression of Kshatriya power, I am going to send you one who is the embodiment of Brahminical qualities, who represents what a Brahmin or the highest spiritual evolution of man is.'[1] The life of Swami Turiyananda left a deep impression on the minds of his students, a vivid account of which we get in the book, *With the Swamis in America.*

A gift of a 160 acres plot of land in San Antone Valley for a retreat, made by a Vedanta student of New York, to Swami Vivekananda, became the first retreat where students of the San Francisco Vedanta Society spent their intense life of the spirit with Swami Turiyananda. But Swami Turiyananda's health broke down on account of the strenuous life. It was decided that he was to return to India for recuperation of health, and specially as he had a desire to see the beloved leader. Swami Vivekananda, however, had passed away before Swami Turiyananda reached Calcutta. When it was known that Swami Turiyananda would return to India Swamiji asked Swami Trigunatitananda, who was working single-handed for the *Udbodhan,* the Bengali organ of the Order, to go to San Francisco. Swami Trigunatita agreed but his departure to the West was delayed by the sudden passing away of Swami Vivekananda on 4th July, 1902. He sailed for America *via* the Pacific and reached San Francisco on January 2, 1903.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Peterson was for a time the headquarters of the Society but in March 1903, a flat was taken to provide larger space for classes and lectures. The work of the Society had by 1904 grown so enormously that Swami Trigunatita felt the Society should have its own building. With the Swami to think was to act. A committee was soon formed, funds were raised, a plot of land was purchased and the work on the building commenced. By the end of 1905, the building which was to be the first Hindu Temple in the whole of the West was an accomplished fact. The dedication ceremony took place on January 7, 1906, 'and the first services were held on Sunday, January 15.'

The peace retreat in San Antone Valley was utilized every year by the Swami until his sudden and accidental death on January 10, 1914.

The Society now has two other centres, one at Berkeley and another at Sacramento. Besides, in San Francisco itself, the Society has built a spacious new Temple to accommodate the growing congregation. This temple was dedicated during the Durga Puja of 1959. It has apart from the Shanti Ashrama, two more retreats, one on Lake Tahoe, Sierra Nevada mountains, the other at Olema an hour's drive from San Francisco.[2]

Ever since Swami Vivekananda toured the American and European continents there has been a rising demand to know about the eternal message of the Vedanta. The Rama-

[1] The Disciples of Ramakrishna, Pub. Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. p. 207.

[2] For pictures of the Old and New Temples of San Francisco, the Berkeley Center and the Olema Retreat, see opposite pages 226 and 227.

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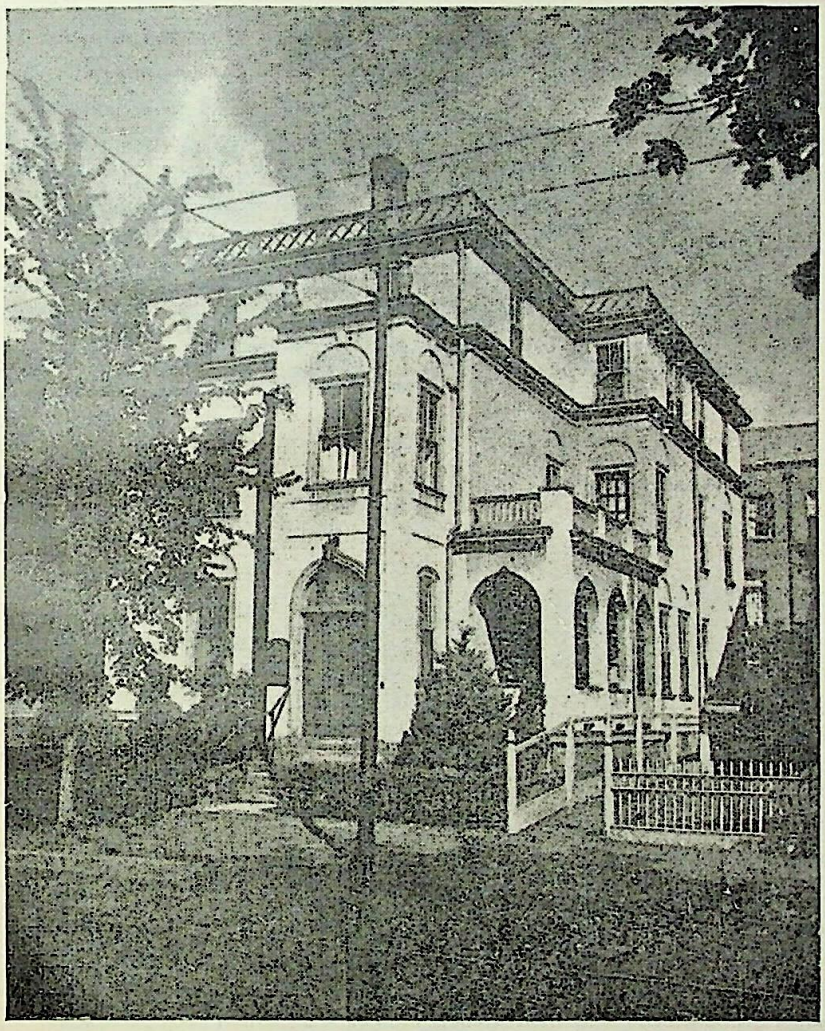
krishna Order has been trying its utmost to meet the demands. Steadily the number of centres have increased from two to nine main centres, with a few more branch centres, in the United States of America alone. It will be interesting to note that most of them have grown round places where Swami Vivekananda worked. This is not however to minimize in any way the strenuous efforts put in by the pioneers of the new centres. Swamiji had sowed the seeds no doubt; but there is always the need to water them, help them grow. And this is hard labour indeed.



The Vedanta Center, Providence.

New York today has two centres, one started by Swami Vivekananda, the other The Ramakrishna - Vivekananda Center founded by Swami Nikhilananda in 1933 of which he continues to be the head. One of his greatest services to America was to acquire and preserve as a place of pilgrimage the cottage[3] where Swami Vivekananda lived during the summer of 1895, teaching a selected band of followers to live Vedanta and from where two of his memorable works, viz. *The Song of the Sannyasin,* and *The Inspired Talks*[4], had originated.

The Vedanta Society of Providence (R.I.) was started by Swami Akhilananda in 1928 and the present home (see picture on the left) was received as a donation and dedicated in 1931. Swami Akhilananda was the head of the Centre till his passing away in September 1962.

Swami Akhilananda also started a Ramakrishna Vedanta Society in Boston (Massachusetts) in the year 1941 and shortly after, the Society received as gift its commodius home at 58, Deerfield Street on the Charles River (see next page). The Society has a retreat,

[3] See pages 251-256 for the history of Thousand Island Park and of the Vivekananda Cottage by Dr. Malcolm Willis.

[4] See article by Swami Atmaghanananda, pages 193 to 198, for notes of I. T. by one of the students of Swamiji, as they were taken down at that time.

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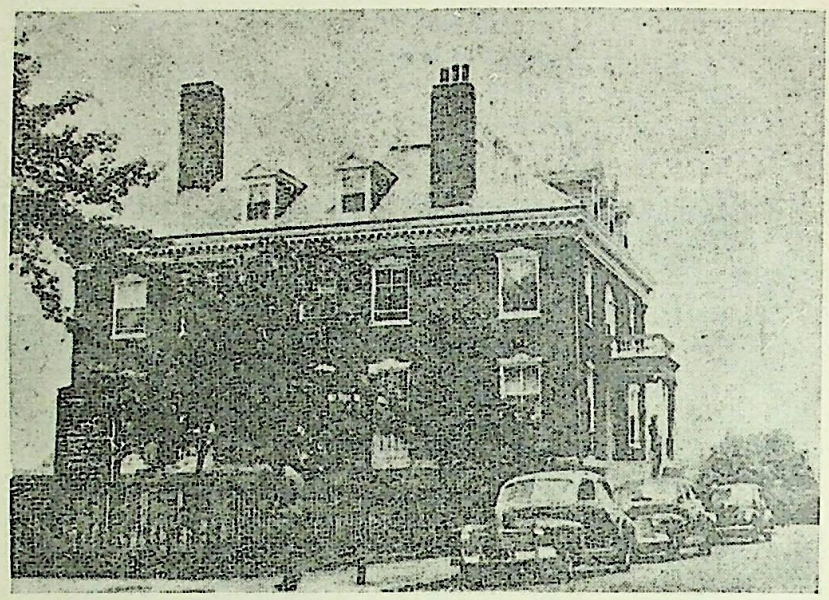
the Sarada Ashrama, on an extensive plot of land at Marshfield, close to the Atlantic ocean, 30 miles from Boston.

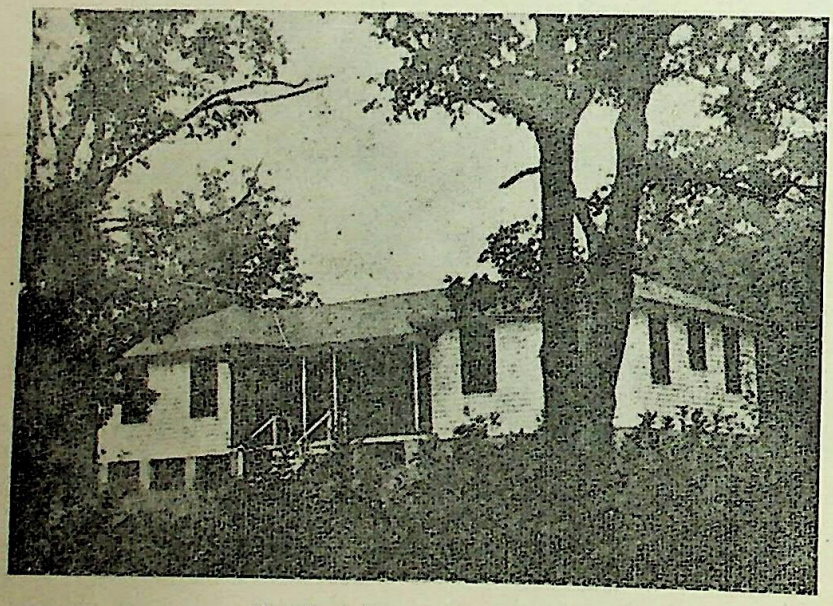
The Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago (Illinois) was started by Swami Jnaneswarananda in the year 1930.

In 1938, the Vedanta Society of St. Louis, came into being with the efforts of Swami Satprakashananda and after 14 years, in 1952, it moved to its own premises.



Ramakrishna Vedanta Society, Boston.

The Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood, was started by Swami Prabhavananda in 1930. It has a monastery at Trabuco Canyon, and a Math for Women at Santa Barbara, 86 miles from Los Angeles. A few young men and women have joined the monastery and the Women's Math respectively during the past few years.



Sarada Ashrama, Marshfield.

The Ramakrishna Order has one centre in Argentina, South America, which was started in 1933 by Swami Vijayananda, who continues to be its head. It is the only centre in the Latin American countries so far. The centre known as the Ramakrishna Ashrama, at Buenos Aires has its own home from 1941.

England as we have seen had also claimed the attention of Swami Vivekananda. He had great hopes of his work in England but it took a long time before a permanent centre came into being there. The present centre in London was started by Swami Ghanananda in the year 1948 and moved to its own present premises in 1952 (see picture on next page).

Swami Vivekananda visited Paris more than once. He had great admiration

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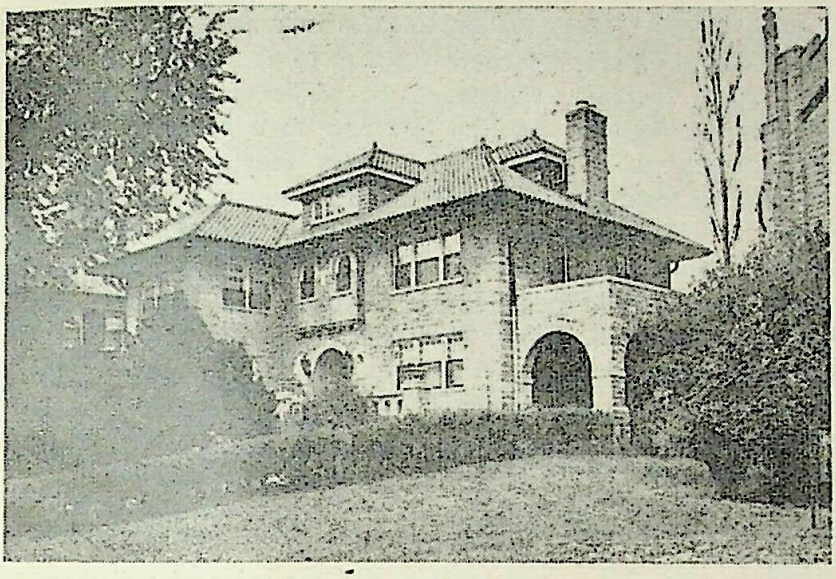
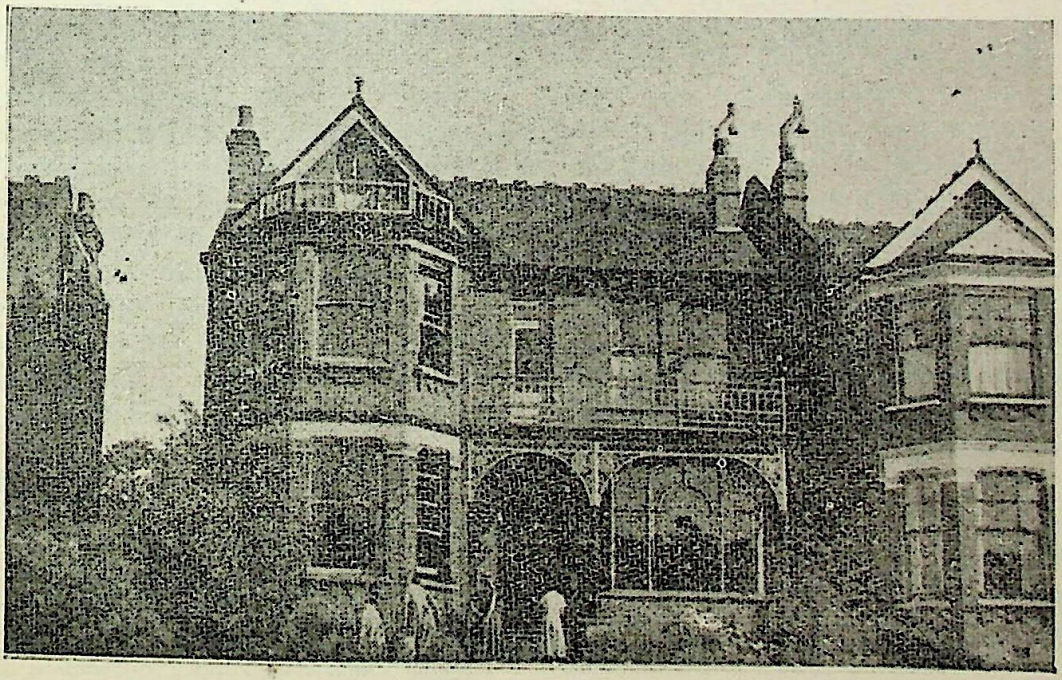
for French art. A nucleus for a centre in Paris was formed by Swami Yatiswarananda in 1936. The following year Swami Siddheswarananda took up the work. It has now its own property at Gretz, Seine et Marne, about 22 miles from Paris.



Vedanta Society of St. Louis, U.S.A.

A Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre has been started in October, 1958 at Geneva, Switzerland by Swami Nityabodhananda.

The work in the West consists mainly in the propagation of Vedanta as lived and revivified by Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, by holding classes, discourses, and giving interviews to genuine seekers. Swami Vivekananda has thus created a permanent interest in the West towards Vedantic thought. Thousands if not millions, have been and are being benefited by the message of Vedanta, and this is why the whole world today pays homage to the



Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, London.

modern apostle of Vedanta, Swami Vivekananda on the occasion of his birth centenary. We are sure if mankind heeds this message it can, in spite of the dark clouds of uncertainty hanging round it, survive.

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND INDIAN CULTURE

(*Continued from Page* 312)

inherent in man, so that humanity as a whole may, without dissension, live in peace. Times have changed.. It will not do now to hug to our bosom old narrow ideas of gain for 'one's country' at the cost of others' and be fanatic about 'one's religion'. All narrow barriers are breaking down, and the whole humanity is becoming one at the present time. Will not the narrow conception of racialism and bigotry about religion die even after observing the present day trend! Our purpose in relating all these is to state that Swami Vivekananda came to us and lived with us for the welfare of the whole of humanity. He has ushered in a new angle of vision from which we should assess religion and nationalism. And this is the reason we look upon him as an image of Sri Ramakrishna — an embodiment of all religions, one who realized the significance of the Veda Mantra 'Truth is One, sages call it differently.'

(*To be continued*)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

We have in this number, which is dedicated to Swamiji on the occasion of his birth centenary, endeavoured to place before our readers some aspects of his many-sided personality. We hope it will create interest in the readers, who are not acquainted with his thoughts and life to know more about him and in those already acquainted a desire to have a firmer grasp of his ideas. The life and works of these spiritual personalities do not reveal themselves at a first glance or on a casual reading. They require to be read and re-read and more than that they require us to create a spiritual background before we can hope to know them. The more we feel a taste for the life of the spirit, the more light shall issue forth from their teachings.

And to know a divine being we cannot but take the help of another divine being. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, 'Only a jeweller can appraise the true value of a diamond.' So to know about Swamiji it will aid us a great deal if we know what Sri Ramakrishna said of him. We have, therefore, begun this number with a few extracts from the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna. What a lofty place Sri Ramakrishna gave Swami Vivekananda can be noted even from these few sayings. His love for the disciple was unique and has not a parallel in history. His very presence would sometimes throw the Master into ecstasy. It was in his care that Sri Ramakrishna left his young disciples. As it will be interesting to see how the brother-disciples looked upon their leader, we have appended some of their sayings which, of course, by no means are exhaustive. For fuller details we call the attention of the readers to the source books from where the quotations have been culled out.

NEWS AND REPORTS

SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, MADRAS.

Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras observed the hundred and first birth anniversary of Swami Ramakrishnananda on July 19, 1963 with Mangalarati, Puja, Homa and feeding of Daridranarayanas. The public function which came off on July 21 started with Harikatha by Sri T. S. Balakrishna Sastrigal, (3-30 p.m. to 5-15 p.m.). The meeting with Sri T. L. Venkatarama Iyer, Ex-Judge, Supreme Court, in the chair started at 5-30 p.m. Swami Kailasananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras spoke in English, Swami Nishkamananda, President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Ootacamund, spoke in Tamil; after which the president of the meeting addressed the gathering. The meeting came to a close with a vote of thanks by Sri S. Parthasarathy, Secretary, Vivekananda College, Madras. After the evening Aratrikam there was bhajan for about an hour, by the sadhus and devotees of the Math led by Swami Priyananda.

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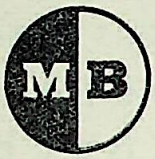

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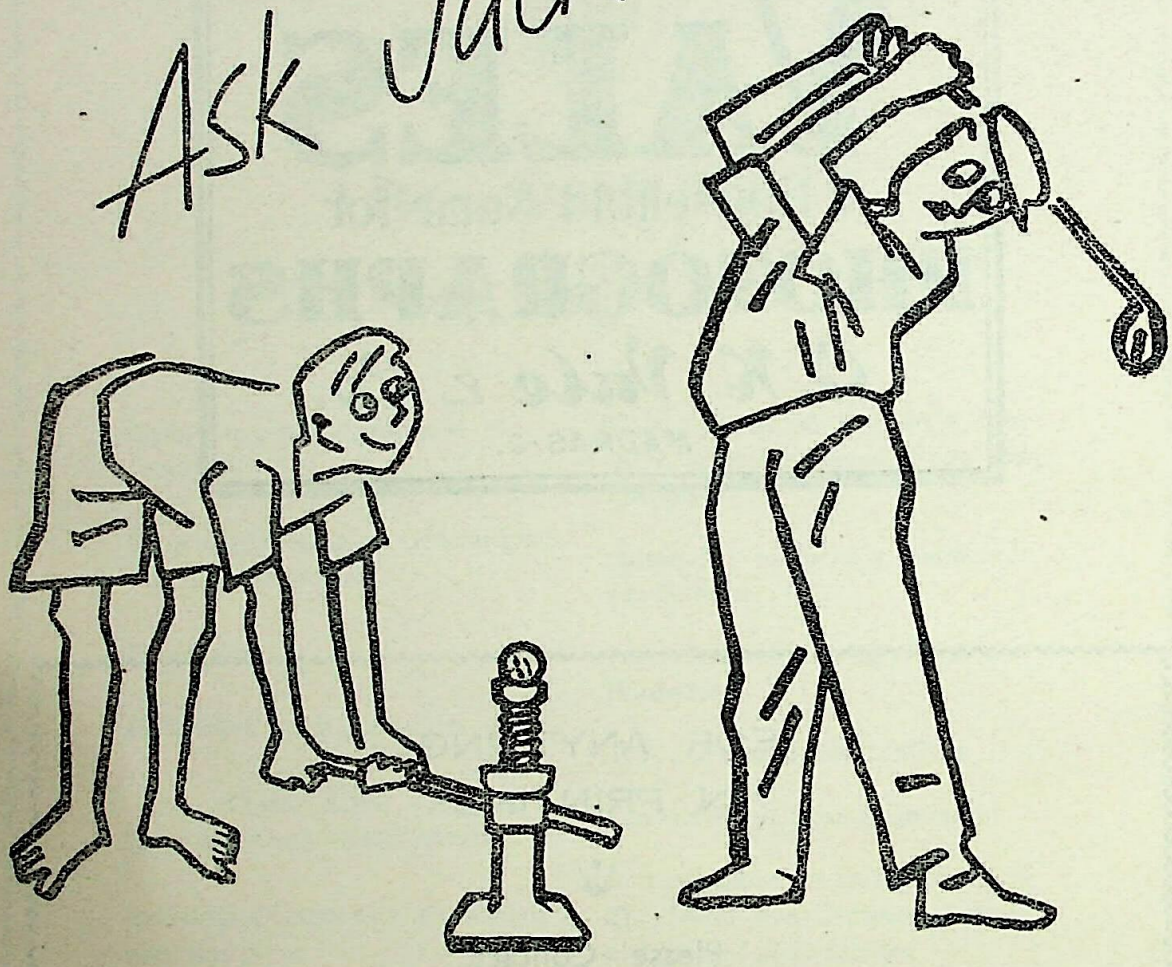

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"Swami Vivekananda considered all fruitful labour as worship and service to man as service to god."

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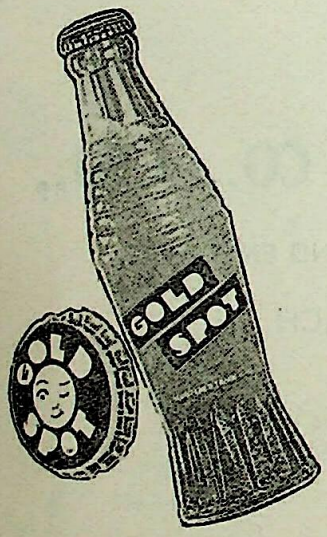

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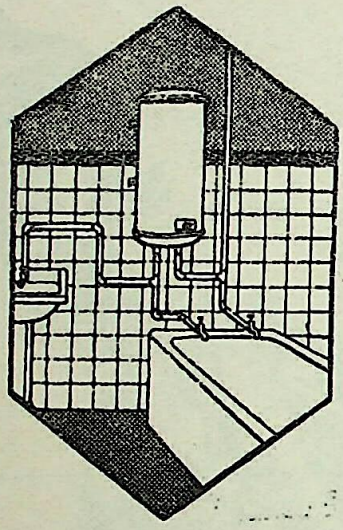

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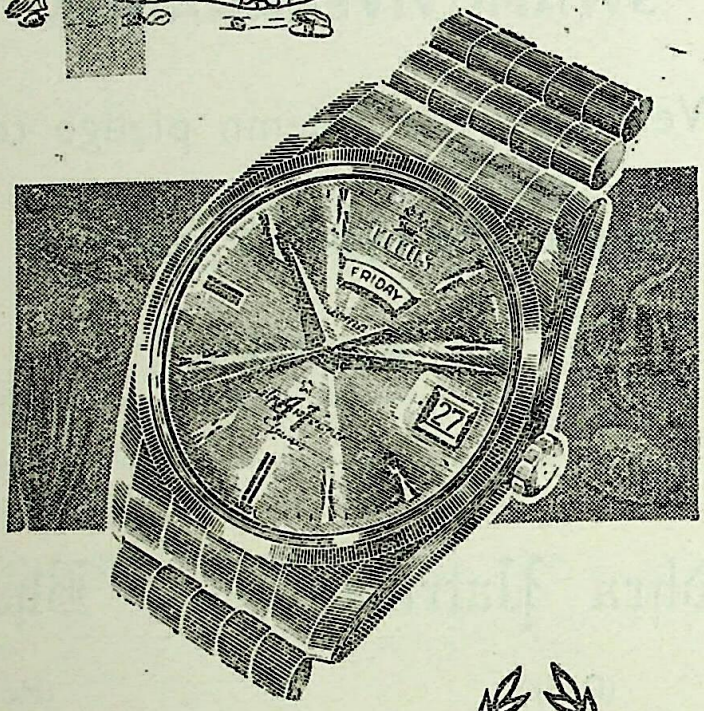

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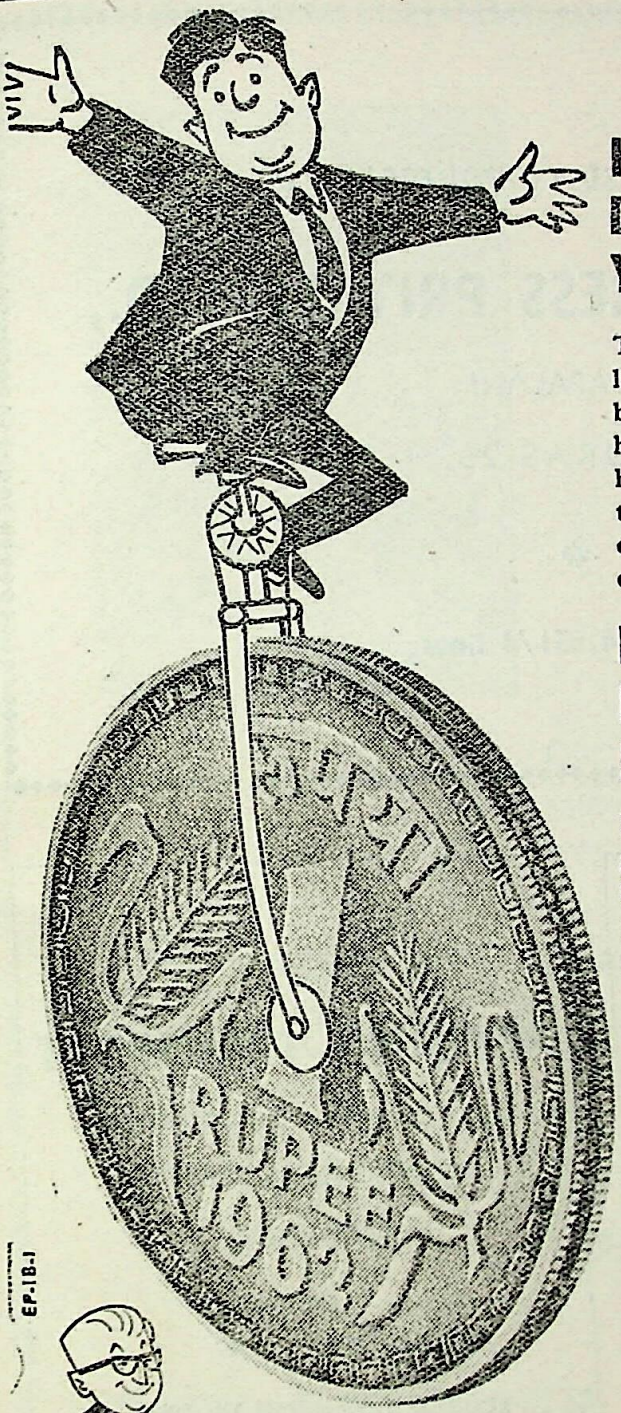

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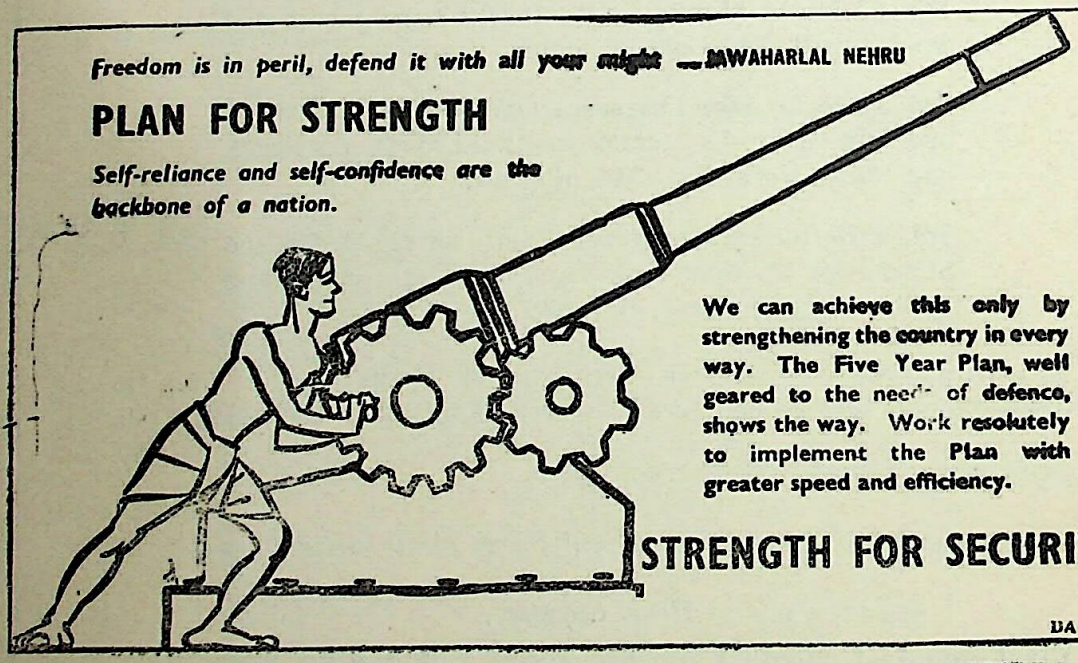

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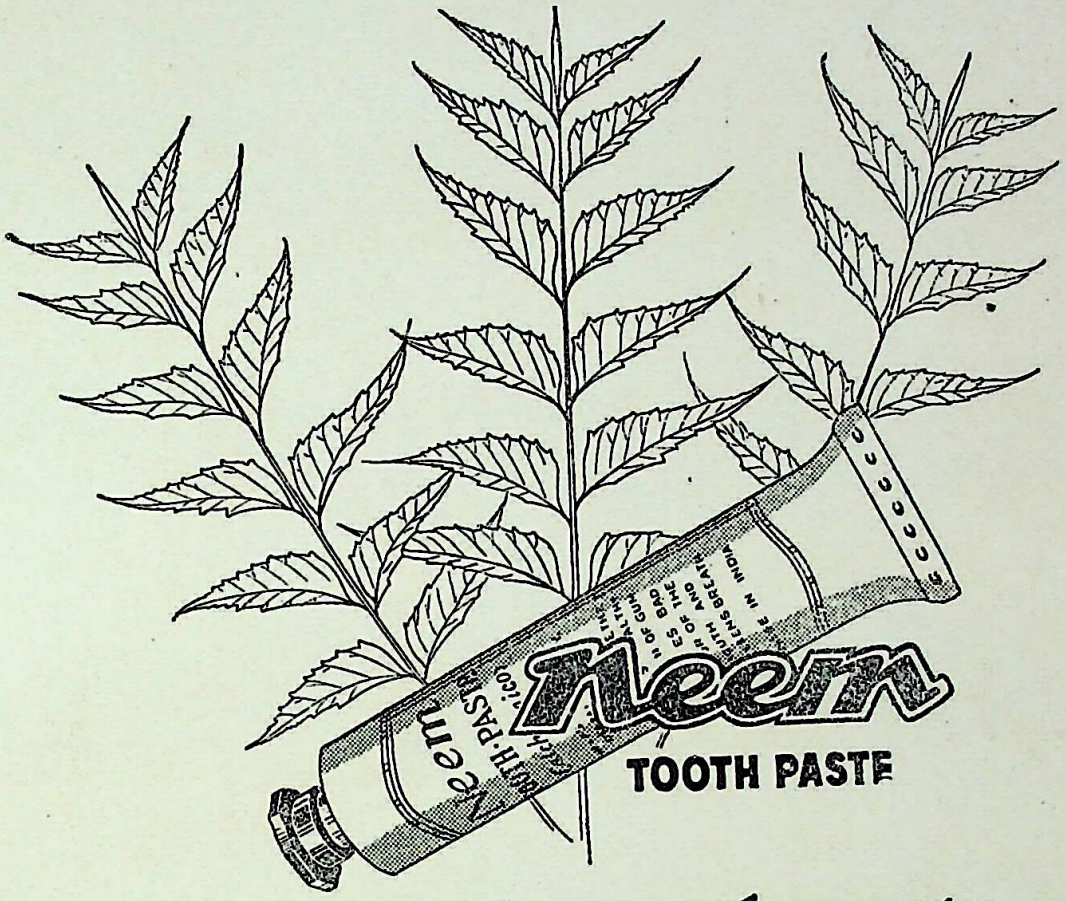

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